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Presbyterianism defended,
and the arguments of modern

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PRESBYTERIANISM DEFENDED,

AND THE ARGUMENTS OF MODERN ADVOCATES OF PRELACY
EXAMINED AND REFUTED,

IN FOUR DISCOURSES,

BY

MINISTERS OF THE SYNOD OF ULSTER.



NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR.

“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,
and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

GLASGOW:

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1839.

TO THE
REV. DR. HANNA,
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ROSEMARY STREET,
AND PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE
ROYAL COLLEGE, BELFAST,
FOR
THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER,
THESE DISCOURSES,
PREACHED BY MINISTERS WHO FORMERLY ENJOYED THE
BENEFIT OF HIS THEOLOGICAL PRELECTIONS,
ARE MOST AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED.



G. W. Musgrave



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PREFACE.

WERE any apology necessary for the publication of the following discourses, it might be sufficient to say that it is right that the members of the Presbyterian Church should be instructed in their own distinguishing principles. And it is the especial design of the writers to contribute towards that object.

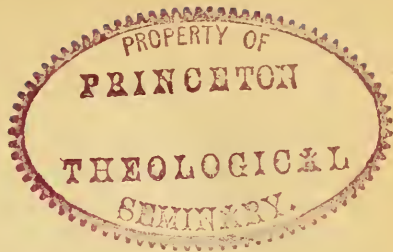
They do not pretend to deny, however, that they have been determined by circumstances in engaging in the controversy at the present time, and in publishing their views in the following form. They have been well aware that the ecclesiastical polity to which they are attached has been frequently assailed of late days with much severity and intolerance. But although often coming from high quarters, they have not felt called upon to notice such attacks, as it does not appear that hitherto such active measures as at present, were taken to have them circulated by the press. About twelve months' since, a course of sermons was published, which had been preached in the Cathedral of Derry, in which the leading points of difference between Presbyterians and Episcopalians were fully discussed. Some time after, another discourse was preached in the same cathedral, before the primate and the assembled clergy of the united dioceses of Derry and Raphoe, boldly denying to the ministers of the Presbyterian Church any commission

to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. Those discourses were printed and circulated; and, of course, challenged criticism and inquiry.

The local position of the authors of the following discourses, in Derry and its immediate vicinity, seemed to require of them to notice the controversy, where it had been so publicly introduced. On four successive Sabbath evenings, those discourses were delivered to large and deeply attentive audiences, whose interest in the controversy had been especially excited by the late commemoration of the second centenary of the second Reformation in Scotland. The reasons which operated to call for the preaching of those discourses, seem also to warrant their publication.

The respective claims of prelacy and presbyterianism are canvassed freely; and while the unscriptural character of prelacy itself, and the abuses of the Church of England are fully exposed, no attempt is made to denounce that portion of the Christian commonwealth as not being a church of Christ.

We seek not her injury, but we earnestly desire her reformation, and until such reformation take place, we believe it to be a special duty to build up our people in the faith of those principles for which their fathers bled; and which we still esteem to be of divine authority.



INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BY THE REV. HENRY WALLACE,
LONDONDERRY,
MODERATOR OF THE SYNOD OF ULSTER.

THE Presbyterian Church has been less forward than perhaps any other denomination of professing Christians, to present before the world the credentials of her Divine commission. The pulpit for the most part has been silent upon the subject of the distinguishing characteristics of her government and discipline; and her people can testify, that so carefully have controversies upon those subjects been avoided in the public ministrations, that they might have been attentive hearers for years, without having been able to learn from the scope of the preaching, to what form of church polity their pastors were attached. Nor even upon the platform, where a greater liberty of dissertation is allowable, have our ministers indulged in descants upon the apostolicity of our church, the order and beauty of her arrangements, and the chaste and graceful simplicity of her venerable forms of worship. The press, too, has hitherto maintained an almost unbroken silence upon the subject, more

especially in Ireland. It is a matter of patient search and frequent inquiry, to discover books defensive or expository of Presbyterianism. Pamphlets and periodicals, so diligently and so extensively pressed into the service of other churches, are in vain enquired after, if the order and discipline of the Presbyterian church be the required subjects. We have been reluctant to break in upon that harmony which for so long a period has been maintained between the churches of England and of Scotland, and their respective branches in this country. That harmony has been maintained by the silence and forbearance of Presbyterians; and it is declared to be in danger if they presume to enter upon the field of controversy by presenting to the world an exposition of their principles, and an inquiry into the errors to which they are opposed.

The same love of peace has induced us to suffer the history of our church to sink into general forgetfulness. We have been almost afraid to speak of the Scottish covenanters, and the tales of their sufferings which once hallowed the converse of Presbyterian firesides, and contributed to nurture the piety of the young, are now almost unknown to their ungrateful descendants. The caricatures of a Scott have tended to make their memory contemptible in the estimation of fashionable prejudice and ignorance; and the general consent with which Presbyterians have suffered the green damp moss to obliterate their names from their mouldering monuments, has tended to deepen the unfavourable impression so agreeably and facetiously imparted. The noble "Vindication" of Dr. M'Crie is perhaps little known in the circle

where its influence is most required. It is interesting, however, to think that still the fine arts may be made available to rescue the names of the "Worthies" of the Covenant from the reproach with which they have been so unjustly burdened. The general circulation among the ranks of taste and fashion, of the beautiful engravings of Harvey's paintings of the 'Covenanter's Baptism,' the 'Preaching,' and the 'Battle of Drumclog,' cannot fail to awaken an interest of tenderness and of sympathy, which will at least mitigate the severity of the judgment which an ill-informed and prejudiced posterity has passed upon them. That sect of Presbyterians alone which continues to bear their name, has maintained a uniform advocacy of their character and regard for their names, while they have been honoured to bear no small share of their reproach.

The late commemorations in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Derry, celebrating Scotland's deliverance from the yoke of prelacy, have given no unequivocal signs of a reviving sympathy with the spirit, and admiration of the deeds of the Scottish Covenanters. They have demonstrated that the old spirit of witness-bearing is ready to stand forth the same stalwart form as when it bore the renowned standard of "CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT" in the day of battle and of blood. Laud and Sharpe, the relentless persecutors of our noble fathers, have found biographers in our own day, who have masked them as saints and martyrs, for exhibition before a generation who have been suffered to remain in ignorance of their real characters. Let us not continue longer an unjust neglect of the memory of the righteous, while

it is daringly attempted to transfer the fair fame which is theirs, to their betrayers and murderers. Nor must we longer be ashamed to acknowledge that our convictions of the unscriptural character of prelacy are as strong as were theirs. It is true there is not the same measure of stern practical necessity for opposing that system as in the days of our Scottish forefathers. They did not contend and suffer in vain. The limitations of the royal prerogative, and the diminution or destruction of the influence of the prelates in the national councils, are among the fruits of their victories, which have happily descended to us, and which leave to us the less perilous duty of argumentative warfare. That duty, however, is laid upon us; and the circumstances of the present times are such as to demand that it be faithfully and resolutely fulfilled. We have always been aware that there existed a party in the Church of England who were at no pains to conceal their dislike of the Presbyterian church, and who haughtily repelled all our claims to sisterhood or ecclesiastical consanguinity. Nor was this feeling directed against the more obscure denominations of Presbyterians in this country, even the Established Church of Scotland was not excepted. Still, however, those uncharitable feelings were not very extensively uttered; and, as we had the consolation to enjoy the good wishes of the most excellent among the inferior clergy, there was a general consent to suffer them to pass without censure or animadversion. Whether those feelings have become more general in the Church of England or not, we do not presume to determine; but certainly there is a much greater disposition to give them currency

from the episcopal throne, from the pulpit, and from the press, than for some years past. The claims which she advances to exclusive apostolicity are now put forth with an air of haughty superciliousness, and with an intolerant severity which we had been accustomed to persuade ourselves were the genuine exhalations of the Roman marshes alone. The Church seems apprehensive that of late years she has become too liberal; that she had abandoned too much of the dignified ascendancy which was her true and privileged position; and that there is a necessity that she should reinthroned herself in that becoming exclusiveness from which a mistaken generosity had so far seduced her. It is bewailed by some within her that a coldness and indifference to the privilege of "belonging to the Apostolic Church" too much prevails. How is it to be accounted for? "I fear it must be owned," says one, "that much of the evil is owing to the comparatively low ground which we ourselves, the ministers of God, have chosen to occupy in defence of our commission. For many years we have been much in the habit of resting our claim on the general duties of submission to authority, of decency and order, of respecting precedents long established, instead of appealing to that warrant which marks us *exclusively* for God's AMBASSADORS. Why should we not seriously endeavour to impress our people with this plain truth; that by separating themselves from our communion, they separate themselves not only from a decent, orderly, useful society, but from THE ONLY CHURCH IN THIS REALM WHICH HAS A RIGHT TO BE QUITE SURE THAT SHE HAS THE LORD'S BODY TO GIVE TO HIS PEOPLE?"

Our claims to be esteemed a church of Christ are broadly denied in numerous publications, in visitation charges and sermons. Are we true to our own ministerial character and commission to suffer in silence that its validity be impugned, and our ministerial acts be pronounced unauthorised and presumptuous? Are we to be held up before the people who wait on our ministry as self-constituted teachers, from whom it should be their first duty to secede? Shall such a degree of forbearance be exacted of us as that we should abstain from all measures of defence? And above all, shall that most honourable commission which we hold from the Messiah, the Head of the church, suffer insult and indignity through us unrebuked and unrepelled? We honestly and firmly believe that we possess the warrant of his Word for the office which we hold, and for the manner in which we humbly endeavour to exercise it. We hold (and we believe the position to be successfully maintained in the following discourses) that the polity of the Presbyterian Church is a part of the faith once delivered to the saints—that it involves the glory of Messiah's headship; and that the prosperity of the visible church is dependent upon the maintenance of it, in faithfulness and purity, as the ordinance of God. We believe the system of Presbytery to possess a superior adaptation for the promulgation of truth and the suppression of error, a belief abundantly justified by the most gratifying results. It is not a little amusing to see the perplexity of the Oxford school of theology, while confessing the result, to account for its philosophy. "The doctrinal result of dispensing with episcopal succession," cannot be denied to be

favourable in the case of Scotland. "Allowing the many good parts of her system (which, be it observed, are all in a primitive spirit) full credit for this, yet one may be permitted to observe, that something naturally must be ascribed to the vicinity of our own church diffusing a kind of wholesome contagion, the benefit of which has been acknowledged by some of the great lights of the Scottish establishment." It is strange that this beneficial "contagion" should be of such a peculiar character, so eccentric in its operations as to diffuse a salubrity over Scotland, while within her own geographical limits heresy thrives so rankly. Alas! even within her own pale, her sanatory influence is incapable of preserving even her own children from the plague of multifarious errors. When the Presbyterian writers of the seventeenth century insisted that there existed a native tendency in Prelacy to introduce Popery, we do not think that the opinion was more truly justified by the circumstances of the times in which they wrote, than by results developed long before, as well as by events which are occurring now.

It is not uncommon to hear Presbyterianism charged with a tendency to generate errors in doctrine, as well as a democratic licentiousness in polity. Arianism and Socinianism have been charged upon Presbytery as its lawful offspring; and more especially as chargeable upon the want of a liturgy. Now it might be expected that prelacy, with its liturgy, would have rendered the introduction of errors very nearly impossible; or, if introduced by the covert expedients of insincere professors, that it would speedily be detected and dislodged. Is this expec-

tation justified by the facts? Very far from it. It is under the form of prelacy that the most extensive system of error which has ever defiled the professing Christian church, has appeared. The system of Prelacy has hitherto been much more productive of the errors of Popery than of the saving truths of the Gospel, and still continues to be so. From century to century the dogmas of Popery grew up with pernicious luxuriance under its shade, until the heavenly plant of Divine truth was hidden from the sight. Nor was the liturgy able to maintain a pure doctrine or a pure worship; superstition and idolatry were fostered by its use. Even in later times, since the Réformation in England up till the present day, it is well known that even prelates themselves have been chargeable with various doctrinal errors; and at no period was there ever a greater variety of doctrine maintained by the clergy of the established church than at this moment. We might consider ourselves almost justified in affirming that the Oxford 'Tracts for the Times' were developing at present the native tendency of Prelacy to introduce Popery. For more than six years have those tracts been issuing from the press, and extensively circulating some of the worst dogmas of Popery, and as yet no authority in the Church has attempted any interference. Now the Church of England has been asserting herself to be the very fortress and bulwark of Christianity in these lands; yet is her state at this very moment such as to shake our confidence in her powers of defence. Popery is undermining her own strength; she is surrendering her strongholds to the enemy. There is a goodly number, we bless God, of noble spirits within her

who are crying aloud, who are proclaiming the danger; but the *authority* of the Church, wherever it is lodged, is silent and ineffective. It is notorious that the poisonous influence of Oxford doctrines is spreading rapidly in England, and that even the dignitaries of the Church have not escaped unaffected. Does not all this serve to warrant the old accusation, that Prelacy has a native tendency to introduce Popery?

Now, while the gross darkness of Popery covered the great mass of the people of Europe, the Presbyterian Waldenses maintained the simplicity of Gospel truth. And that truth shone so purely bright as to attract the attention and awaken the vengeance of Rome. Many a martyr of Jesus was found in the deep valleys of the Alps before Prelacy appeared on the theatre of Europe, unassociated with the most criminal and persecuting superstition. And when at last Prelacy stood forth, stripped of the most obnoxious parts of the drapery of Rome, casting away the accumulated errors of many a century, and appearing among the marshalled hosts of the Protestant churches, bearing high the standard of Christ's testimony, she speedily discovered a determination to assert claims to a domineering ascendancy. The Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity in England secured that ascendancy for a time, until the tyrannical enforcement of those acts awakened those convulsions by which the church and the crown were both overthrown. Still Prelacy continued to cherish its lust for ascendancy; and scrupled not to resort to the most cruel measures to maintain it. The Puritans, the assertors of British liberty, were forced into

a state of separation from the national church by the intolerant and bigoted measures of the prelates and adherents. The supremacy of the crown in all matters and over all persons civil and ecclesiastical, and the declaration that the administration of the sacraments, according to the Book of Common Prayer and the Queen's injunctions, was agreeable to the word of God and the practice of the primitive church, were the tests by which all ecclesiastics were tried in the time of Elizabeth. Some declined the declaration and were deposed from their office as far as civil tyranny could reach it. When, by a division of *fifty-nine* against *fifty-eight*, it was determined by the Convocation that no change should be made in the Book of Common Prayer, the separation between the Puritans and the churchmen within the establishment was distinctly and broadly marked. The very best ministers left the church rather than submit to the arbitrary proceedings of the court and the bishops, in enforcing superstitious observances and the wearing of popish habits. For the sake of the enforcement of these things, churches were left vacant and the people uninstructed; but the loved ascendancy of the prelates enjoyed its triumph. The deprived ministers were left no alternative but to assume the position and order of a separate church; and who shall question the duty of their resolving, that "since they could not have the word of God preached nor the sacraments administered without *idolatrous gear*; and since there had been a separate congregation in London and another at Geneva in Queen Mary's time, which used a book and order of preaching, administration of sacraments and discipline that the

great Mr. Calvin had approved of, and which was free from the superstitions of the English service; that therefore it was their duty, in their present circumstances to break off from the public churches, and to assemble, as they had opportunity, in private houses or elsewhere, to worship God in a manner that might not offend against the light of their consciences”?

The most rigid means were employed to prevent their meetings; and the prisons were as full of the victims of religious intolerance in the days of Elizabeth, as in the days of Mary; and during the whole course of a reign so applauded for the prosperity of Protestantism, the persecution of the non-conformists was maintained with persevering rigour. The succeeding reigns still exhibit Prelacy in the same unamiable aspect, the same unwearied aspirant after ascendancy, and courting that idol with offerings of cruelty and blood.

Turn we to Scotland, the scene of unequalled contests and of unrivalled victories. Here the same thirst for spiritual despotism distinguished the abettors of Prelacy; and here the horrors of persecution inflicted upon our presbyterian fathers, by professed Protestants, outmeasured all that had disgraced the tyranny of Rome. And what was their crime? Their attachment to presbyterianism as the ordinance of God, and their firm and faithful determination to assert the prerogatives of the Messiah, as the King and Head of his own church. The Prelatists were satisfied that the reigning sovereign should assume unlimited authority over all persons, and in all causes civil and ecclesiastical,—that he should mould the

Church into any form he pleased, that he should reign as its visible head, and, by his supreme will, direct its discipline and order. The Presbyterians held all such claims as the blasphemous assumptions of Antichrist; and maintaining the right of Jesus alone to rule by his own laws in his own church, they refused to submit their necks to the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny, or to comply with a system so dishonouring to the rightful supremacy of their Lord. From the period of the first General Assembly in 1560 until the year 1688, the history of Scotland presents as its most distinguishing feature the struggle of Prelacy after an oppressive ascendancy, and the resistance of Presbytery to its unrighteous usurpations. The respective characters of the two parties during this protracted contest are well known. The profanity, the irreligion, and the reckless cruelty of the persecutors, could never in any age or in any country have been met by a contrast more broadly marked, than in the fervent piety, the burning zeal, and the firm endurance of the Scottish Presbyterians.

In Ireland the same intolerant spirit on the part of Prelacy distinguished its days of power. When Laud undertook to manage the affairs of the Church in Ireland, he determined that in all points it should be strictly conformable to the English Church, which he had modelled and adorned after his own heart. Presbyterian ministers from Scotland, encouraged to settle in Ireland, were for a time sanctioned by the authorities civil and ecclesiastical. A general toleration prevailed, so that they exercised their ministry freely and successfully, enjoying like privileges with those who entertained prelatical views. "Though

like the English puritans," says Dr. Reid, "in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, they were comprehended within the pale of the established episcopal church, enjoying its endowments and sharing its dignities; yet, notwithstanding this singular position which they occupied, they introduced and maintained the several peculiarities both of discipline and worship by which the Scottish church was distinguished." This state of peace however was not of long duration: the influence of Laud armed the ready zeal of a bishop of Down and Connor against the most devoted and distinguished ministers within his diocese, by whom they were deposed from their office. "And thus," says the same authority "for not yielding a conformity, from which they had been exempted when they entered on the ministry in Ireland, were these faithful men violently excluded from their offices, and thrown destitute on the world." It seemed to be a matter of minor consideration that the population of whole districts should be left uninstructed, or that the light of the Gospel should be quenched, where the great object was the establishment of the Prelacy in its exclusiveness and grandeur. Happily the same ever-memorable era which brought liberty and happiness to Scotland, gave rest to the presbyterian church in Ireland, but at the expense of many privileges which it had a right to consider as guaranteed to it by the State. It is but an indifferent compensation which it enjoys in the amount of endowment annually voted by the legislature, on the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, who includes it among the items of his miscellaneous estimates. It is thus placed in a most unsatisfactory

condition; every necessary increase to its amount being entirely subject to the convenience or the caprice of every new chancellor of the exchequer, or secretary for Ireland; and every paltry addition bestowed as a most especial favour. We believe that were faith kept with the presbyterian church in Ireland, according to the circumstances of its first plantation, we possess an undoubted right to endowments commensurate with its increasing extension; and did our successive governments take a just and enlightened view of the matter they should hail every new claim presented to them as an additional pledge of peace and prosperity to the land.

Why, it may be asked, do we rake up the cruel histories of by-gone and intolerant ages; do we mean to charge upon the Church of England in the present day, the deeds of persecution perpetrated in other generations? We might ask, in reply, has the Church of England at any after period disavowed the deeds which we condemn? This is the reply which Protestants justly make, when the more liberal of their brethren arraign them for charging upon the Romish Church of the present day, the crimes of former persecutions. Has the Romish Church disavowed them? Has she abandoned the profession of the principles that led to them? We ask, has the Church of England abandoned the profession of that exclusiveness and ascendancy which fomented the cruelties and intolerance of other days? We are answered by the fifth Canon of the Irish Church. We are answered by the modern canonization of Laud and Sharpe. We are answered by the most contemptuous abjuration of all sisterhood with the

Presbyterian Church, by those who occupy the chief seats in the synagogues. These are manifestations of the same spirit under which our renowned forefathers suffered such persecutions; and it is right that on our part they be exposed and condemned.

It is not a little to be wondered at, that beset as the Church of England has been and continues to be by enemies of every name and variety of opinion, she should adopt a line of conduct calculated to destroy all the remaining sympathies that lingered around her devoted fabric. Does any one ask by whom were those sympathies cherished? We answer, by Presbyterians, and by Presbyterians alone. And for this there were two causes, whose combined operation in later days seemed to promise fair to secure our unaffected good-will towards the Church of England. In the first place the great leading sections of Presbyterians in Scotland and Ireland contend for the same great principles which the Church of England advocates. Their protest against Popery is as strong and consistent as hers. We hold equally with her the duty of the state to provide for the religious instruction of the people: in other words, we hold the same views of the doctrine of religious establishments. We do not occupy a position of political hostility to the Church of England. We cannot therefore unite with those who would overturn her because she is protestant—for we are Protestants. Nor with those who would overthrow her because she is established—for we believe a church establishment to be according to the word of God. Nor do we object to her because she holds property—for we believe that property may be

lawfully allocated for the maintenance of the church, and should be guaranteed for the church's use while faithfully engaged in promoting the instruction of the people. Our objections to the Church of England are not political; and politics, therefore, have not interposed to injure those sympathies which common principles have always a tendency to excite and to maintain.

In the next place there has been growing up in the Church of England, for some years past, a party distinguished by the epithet, 'evangelical,' whose views of scripture doctrine, whose personal piety and ministerial faithfulness, have been such as to secure the most unfeigned respect and brotherly affection of the Presbyterian Church. It has been a cherished hope that the growing influence of those right-hearted men would at length lead to some amelioration at least, of the state of the church, or happily bring about a reformation which would better adapt her to the work in which she is professedly engaged, in a country in which she has hitherto been at so little pains to render her ministrations acceptable. The evangelical ministers in her communion have been attempting to supply her lack of service; and many of them her lack of charity towards other evangelical denominations. Yet these very men are accused by the dominant party in the Church as dangerous to her peace, and as hostile to her interests as the most violent dissenters who have assailed her reputation or denounced her being. These men have felt the impracticable character of the Church's constitution, and have frequently manifested a desire to effect important changes; but, alas! they have no

power to contribute to the furtherance of their desires, the seat of power and of authority, wherever it is, being inaccessible by men of such a spirit. These are the men for whose sakes evangelical Presbyterians have been reluctant to be forced into a state of collision with the Church of England, and for whose sakes they have borne with the haughty contempt and the lofty scorn of those whose personal pretensions to be ministers of the New Testament are at least as little founded in right and truth as the official pretensions of those whom they affect to despise as self-called intruders into the ministry.

These two causes have combined to restrain Presbyterians from engaging in measures of political hostility to the Church of England, and still continue to operate notwithstanding many provocations. And we trust the time will never come under any provocations, when they will be found leagued in associations with the enemies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in order to overturn any form of Protestantism holding that gospel. Although we cannot give the Church of England credit for being, as she assumes to be, the single champion, with the success of whose arms Protestantism is to stand or fall; we acknowledge that such is the position in which she is placed, that it may be that the contest which rages around her walls, may be the contest whose issue shall decide for Ireland at least, whether Protestantism or Popery shall possess the ascendancy. If such be the case, we can only lament that Protestantism is so unhappy in her champion. The known opinions of many of her assailants may warrant her in saying, that it is the truth that is in her which is the point of assault:

while she is chargeable with abuses and corruptions enough, constitutional and administrative, to warrant much of the hostility which has been directed against her from others. This latter circumstance makes the assumed championship of the Church of England disastrous in its effects upon Protestantism; for whole sections of Protestants must either stand aloof from the conflict, or be under very strong temptations to array themselves amongst the adverse legions. The former is the delicate position of the Presbyterian Church. She cannot stand forth to defend Prelacy, believing it to be unscriptural; and it is not the truth which is in the English Church which is *professedly* assailed, although we doubt not that by many it is *really*; knowing that, by the majority of her enemies, her truth is as much abhorred as her abuses. While the Church of England is attacked *professedly* because of corruptions which Presbyterians deplore and condemn, they cannot stand by her side and fight her battle; and they have hitherto been happily preserved from falling under the force of the temptation under which so many evangelical dissenters have fallen, of ranking themselves among the hosts of the adversaries. It is with little reason of self-gratulation that the Church of England esteems herself as occupying a singular and a solitary championship for the integrity and the honours of protestant truth. The abuses by which she is encumbered have at the same time unnerved her own arm, and rendered it impossible for the other evangelical denominations to rally around her standard. In her present state she is the chief source of protestant weakness in these lands; although we gratefully acknowledge that she

has afforded many distinguished and successful combatants who have done noble service in exposing and refuting the errors and abominations of Romanism. We think that it is not without reason that in these times of faction and contest, we complain that we are forced to occupy a false position, and seem equally to be arrayed against the Church of England and the evangelical dissenters, while we have many interests in common with both, and yet cannot fully sympathise with the position of either. It appears to us also that this delicate position occupied by the Presbyterian Church, and into which the abuses of the English Church have forced her, have mainly contributed to make Presbyterian political influence a mere negation, in a country where an unceasing contest for political importance is strenuously maintained. And although Presbyterians constitute one half of the Protestant population, until this day the interests of the great mass of them are unrepresented in the imperial legislature.

Still it may be doubted whether we ought to regret this state of matters. There are many advantages in the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and more especially for carrying forward missionary operations, which may well reconcile her to the humble place she holds among the more stirring communities by which she is surrounded. Aided without being encumbered by the state, allied to no political party and pledged to none, she is happily little affected by political influences. From her peculiar position, and the advantages which she enjoys from her scriptural constitution, she can take a calm survey of events as they pass, and, with the light of

the Divine word, she can scan the whole horizon of society, marking the character of prevailing principles and of popular measures, expressing her judgment upon each, and promptly acting according to her convictions of duty, under little temptation to consider how her political relations may be affected. Long may she continue to prosecute her humble and, blessed be God, her successful endeavours in advancing her Lord's cause, unaffected by the blighting and paralyzing influence of factious politics.

We believe the Divine warrant of the Presbyterian Church to exercise the functions of a New Testament Church, will be found to be ably asserted and defended in the following discourses. That they are called for generally and locally no Presbyterian who values his principles can pretend to deny; and we hope that they may have the effect of leading Presbyterians to assert for their scriptural church a higher station than she has hitherto been esteemed entitled to occupy. They go forth committed to the blessing of the Head of the Church. They are presented as a seasonable gift to the Presbyterian people; and they are appropriately inscribed to the venerable professor under whom the authors have studied theology; and who has ever been distinguished by his steady and enlightened attachment to sound Presbyterianism as the best adapted, as well as most scriptural vehicle for the promulgation of sound theology.

DISCOURSE I.

BY THE REV W. D. KILLEN,
RAPHOE.

The Presbyterian Church a Church of Christ—validity of Presbyterian Ordination—Claims of Apostolical Succession—Testimonies in favour of Presbyterianism.

“The churches of Christ salute you.”—ROM. xvi, 16.

IT would appear that Paul was at Corinth when he dictated the Epistle to the Romans. In Achaia, the province of which Corinth was the chief city, there were then a number of Christian churches. In our text the apostle communicates to the church of Rome the expressions of their regard: *The churches of Christ salute you.*

It is obvious from these words that in the apostolic age such a designation as “*The church of Christ*” was not exclusively appropriated by any *particular section* of the professing disciples of Jesus. The church of Rome did not then claim to be the only true church of Christ. She did not conceive herself insulted when other Christian churches, over which she had no control, were introduced to her. Then the various communities of believers scattered abroad over the earth regarded themselves but as portions of the church catholic or universal, and by

such salutations as that conveyed in our text interchanged tokens of Christian recognition and of Christian charity. And would it not be most desirable that all the evangelical churches of the Reformation should now maintain the same brotherly intercourse? Would not the communion of saints be greatly promoted by the mutual recognition of their ministry and ordinances? Though they may differ in circumstantials, may they not at least salute each other as churches of Christ?

Presbyterians conceive, however, that the United Church of England and Ireland has evinced a very decided disposition to deviate from this course. They conceive that on several recent occasions she has assumed a most unwarrantable and offensive attitude. At a late public discussion held in the metropolis of this island, her champion indirectly stigmatized all the other Protestant churches in the empire, and maintained that "the United Church of England and Ireland is *the true church of Christ*; holy, catholic, and apostolic in these kingdoms."¹ We know indeed, that on the whole, his cause was infinitely better than that of his antagonist; and we rejoice, for the sake of our common Protestantism, that he foiled and confounded the advocate of Popery; but we regret, for the sake of our common Christianity, that he supported a position so groundless, so sectarian, and so uncharitable. Nor has this been the only instance in which Presbyterians have felt themselves aggrieved. It is said that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge is the most

¹ Authenticated Report of the Discussion between the Rev. T. D. Gregg and the Rev. T. Maguire.

influential of the religious associations in the sister island. It is alleged that it comprises amongst its members, in the parent and affiliated branches, all the bishops, and upwards of eleven thousand of the clergy. At a late meeting of this society, held in London, several of the members publicly declared that "the board ought not to recognise *the Presbyterian community* as a church," and a motion virtually refusing to acknowledge the Church of Scotland was carried by a majority.¹ We have still more recently been presented in this city with an example of this spirit of exclusion. In a published discourse preached "before the Lord Primate and the assembled clergy of the dioceses of Derry and Raphoe, on the occasion of the triennial visitation,"² it is broadly insinuated³ that Presbyterian ministers are but "humanly-appointed professors of the art of persuasion," and that they have no "title" to the ministry. Are we to be blamed if we refuse to sit silent under such imputations? Are we not bound either to admit their truth, or expose their weakness?

It would, doubtless, be a severe blow to the general cause of Protestantism, if it could indeed be proved that Presbyterian churches are not to be considered churches of Christ. There are large bodies of Presbyterians not only in this country and in Scotland, but also in America and in several parts of the continent of Europe. Presbyterian authors are to be found in the very first ranks of theological

¹ See *Presbyterian Review* for February, 1838.

² By Charles Boyton, D.D., ex F.T.C.D., M.R.I.A., Rector of Tullyaghinish, September 14, 1838.

³ See note A.

literature. Witsius and Vitringa, and Turretine and Campbell, and others, have produced works which in point of talent and of learning have never been surpassed. The writings of Matthew Henry and of Jonathan Edwards (of Boston) and of Halyburton have long been valued by the spiritually-minded as full of most precious truth and most savoury consolation. For piety, the praise of some Presbyterians is in all the churches, for who has not heard of the prayerfulness of Welsh, and of the devotedness of Brainerd? It will, we presume, scarcely be alleged that Presbyterians are visibly inferior to the members of other churches, as moral, as industrious, and as intelligent citizens. The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians is thus addressed: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1 Cor. i, 2.) The church of God is here described, not by her ecclesiastical order, but by the profession and the character of her members. They are *sanctified in Christ Jesus—called to be saints—and they call upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.* There are at least some Presbyterians who exhibit scriptural evidences that they are sanctified in Christ Jesus and that they are called to be saints. May we not therefore conclude that they belong to the church of God? The Presbyterian church, in her accredited standards, acknowledges Jesus as her divine Lord, and proclaims all the great doctrines of Christianity. If, by a church of Christ we understand a collection of his professing people who worship him according

to his word, surely Presbyterians may have some claim to the designation. There are some Presbyterians who desire to walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and in times past, Presbyterians have often suffered unto death that they might maintain the honour of Christ's crown and covenant. Jesus said—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat. xviii, 20.) Presbyterian congregations meet together in the name of the Redeemer—they have often been blessed with seasons of refreshment and revival; and if their assemblies are honoured by the presence of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls—and if the Divine Master himself is pleased to acknowledge them as his followers—and if He condescends to make himself known unto them, not as he doth unto the world—they may well pity the folly and the presumption of those who will venture to affirm that they are not to be esteemed churches of Christ.

It has been said, with a manifest allusion to the ministers of the Presbyterian church—"There are those who deliver the message, but do not hold the commission." It has been said, again, of the Romish priesthood—"There are those who hold the commission, but do not deliver the message."¹ We answer—if we do not hold the commission, we must indeed be grievously deceived, for we verily believe that we are the ambassadors of Christ. And if there be truth in the declaration—"Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," (1 Sam. ii, 30,) is it not strange that the

¹ Dr. Boyton's Sermon, p. 16.

Son of God should invest traitors with the plenitude of ecclesiastical authority, and yet should withhold his sanction from those who, according to this avowal, are the faithful heralds of his word? Is it not strange that he should qualify some to act as his ambassadors, and reveal to them the secrets of his counsel, and yet, after all, that he should entrust the embassy to others who are utterly ignorant of their errand? The remark of our Lord to the apostles when told of their interference with an individual who was casting out devils in his name, but who belonged not to their company, should rebuke the bigotry of all who are overweaningly attached to the ministry of their own denomination. "John answered and said—Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us; and Jesus said unto him—*Forbid him not*, for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke, ix, 49, 50.) Even supposing that the ministers of the Presbyterian church do not hold the commission, is it not better that they should deliver the message than that the people should perish through the neglect of those who are appointed to a trust which they are both unwilling and incompetent to execute? The word of the Lord requires no credentials—there is a living energy which goes forth with the glorious Gospel, so that even when spoken by a layman it can commend itself to the heart and to the conscience as the mighty power of God. Even supposing we have no commission, yet, if we deliver the message, we may, according to the prophet Jeremiah, turn sinners from the error of their ways. In the xxiii chapter of Jeremiah, at the 21st and 22nd verses, Jehovah thus

speaks: "*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied—but if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.*"

We proceed, however, to observe that we have one very tangible evidence of a call to the ministry, which they commonly want who are most forward to arraign our commission. We have the suffrages of the congregation—the call of the Christian people. We are taught in the New Testament that, in the apostolic age, the call of the people preceded ordination. When the highest officer of the church was to be chosen—when a successor to Judas was to be appointed—did the apostles assume to themselves the privilege of nomination? Did they assemble in secret conclave? Did they take the votes of the apostolic chapter? No such thing. Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, "the number of the names together being about an hundred and twenty," and addressed them on the subject of the vacancy. They accordingly appointed two, of whom one was afterwards chosen by lot. If language have any meaning, we have surely here an instance of the exercise of the popular franchise. Again, when deacons were required—when the lowest office-bearers in the church were to be nominated—did the apostles reserve to themselves the right of selection? Did they declare that the system of popular choice gave rise to strife, and ought not to be countenanced? No. They "called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said—Look ye out among you seven

men of honest report." (Acts, vi, 2, 3.) In our version of the New Testament, the word which signifies *to elect*, has, in one instance, been translated *to ordain*. In the xiv chapter of the Acts, at the 23rd verse, we read of Paul and Barnabas, that they "*ordained* them elders in every church." The original literally signifies—"they *polled* them elders in every church"—they elected them *by a show of hands*. The same word occurs only in one other instance in the New Testament, and it has there been rendered *chosen*. In the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, the viii chapter, at the 19th verse, the passage to which we allude, it refers to a case of popular election. We there read of the brother who was "*chosen of the churches*" to travel with the apostle Paul.¹ It is admitted by ecclesiastical historians that, at least for the first three hundred years of the Christian era, the people elected their pastors.² It is in vain either for sophistry or prejudice to attempt to parry this stubborn fact. After episcopacy was introduced, the people long enjoyed the privilege of electing even their prelates. The famous Council of Nice, held A.D. 325, when many corruptions had crept into the church, issued, as we learn from Theodoret, a Synodical Epistle, containing the following enactment—"If any prelate of the church shall die, it shall be lawful for those who have been received a little before to succeed the deceased, provided they shall be found worthy, and *be chosen by the people*." You may thus see that, in as far as the election of the people is concerned, we stand upon much more substantial grounds than those who are

¹ See Note B.² See Note C.

ready to challenge our commission. We have at least one title-deed which they cannot produce.

But it will doubtless be said, the ministers of the Presbyterian church do not hold the commission, because they have not been episcopally ordained. We answer—If there be no ministers of the word save those who have been episcopally ordained, then both Timothy and Paul are stripped of the ministerial office. Timothy, we find, was ordained “with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” (1 Tim. iv, 14.)¹ It is to no purpose to allege that Paul was concerned in his ordination, for it is expressly stated that the act was presbyterial, and therefore Paul could have assisted only as one of the presbyters. We know that Paul himself had nothing more than presbyterial ordination. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Antioch. In the beginning of the xiii chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read thus: “Now, there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them; and when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” You may see from this passage that there was not a single prelate or apostle concerned in the ordination of Paul and Barnabas.²

We are not indeed aware of any thing like a scriptural argument in support of a purely prelatical

¹ See Note D.

² See Note E.

ordination save that which is attempted to be drawn from the epistles to Timothy and Titus. We shall not at present enter into the case of Titus, as it may be disposed of in precisely the same manner as that of Timothy.¹ It has been alleged that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, and that there he was invested with the sole power of ordination and government. But the epistles to Timothy contain internal evidence that he was *not* the bishop of Ephesus. Paul says to him, (1 Tim. i, 3,) "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." If Timothy were bishop of Ephesus, is it not remarkable that he evinced such a disposition to non-residence? Is it not singular that the apostle felt it necessary to beseech him to abide in his diocese? This is not all. We read in the second epistle, (2 Tim. iv, 9,) "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me"—verse 11, "Take Mark and bring him with thee"—verse 13, "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments"—verse 21, "Do thy diligence to come before winter." It is admitted that Paul was in imprisonment at Rome when he dictated this second epistle, (2 Tim. ii, 9,) and if you take a glance at the map you may have some idea of the extent of the journey which Timothy was expected to undertake. In an age when navigation was in its infancy, it would occupy a much longer time than is now spent in a voyage to America. And had Timothy been bishop of Ephesus, would the apostle have encouraged him to desert his charge

¹ See Note F.

and to spend the winter at Rome? It is abundantly manifest from the whole tenor of these epistles that his stay at Ephesus was but temporary, and that he was related to the church there by no special bond of ecclesiastical connexion. The arguments which have been adduced to prove that at Ephesus he exercised exclusively the powers of ordination and government, are equally unsatisfactory as those which have been urged to show that he was promoted to the bishopric. He was directed to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine." Is it not obvious from this, say Episcopalians, that he ruled over the clergy? He was instructed to "lay hands suddenly on no man." Is it not hence evident, say they, that he alone had power to ordain? He was required "not to receive an accusation against an elder but before two or three witnesses." Is it not clear from this, they exclaim, that he sat in the chair of episcopal judgment? We reply that, according to this system of interpretation, we may establish almost any absurdity. Paul says to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv, 2,) "Preach the word." Does it therefore follow that none others were permitted to preach at Ephesus? He says again, (1 Tim. vi, 17,) "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded." Are we to conclude from this that no other minister in the place had a right to address a word of exhortation to the wealthy? He says also, (1 Tim. iv, 13,) "Give attendance to reading." Are we to deduce from this that no other preacher at Ephesus might venture to be studious? In fact, all the advices contained in these epistles may be appropriately addressed to any minister of the Presbyterian church, for every minister is warranted to

exercise all the functions of the ministry, including preaching, ordination, and discipline. Paul, accordingly, instructs Timothy respecting the various departments of the pastoral care. It appears, indeed to be intimated in these epistles that the same ministerial commission which the evangelist himself possessed, was to be given to those whom he ordained presbyters at Ephesus. "The things," saith Paul, "that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, *the same* commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii, 2.) If, by the things which he had heard among many witnesses, we understand *the charges* which had been *publicly delivered* to him by Paul at the period of his ordination, it must follow that he was to give the *same charges* to others, or that he was to introduce those whom he ordained to an official position the same as that which he himself occupied. He is, indeed, desired to lay hands suddenly on no man; but there is not the slightest shadow of evidence that none others were to be consulted or concerned when individuals were to be set apart to the work of the ministry. Timothy was himself ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and we have every reason to believe that he would adhere to the same rule in the ordination of others.

After all, indeed, it would seem as if those who are most interested in its support, have still some doubts and misgivings as to the propriety of a purely prelatical ordination; for the bishops of the English church, when about to ordain, usually invite some of their clergy to join with them in the imposition of hands. The validity of Presby-

terian ordination has often been acknowledged by some of the most distinguished dignitaries of the episcopal establishment. It is recognised in the articles drawn up in the year 1615, for the use of the Irish church, by Ussher, the learned and godly archbishop of Armagh. That celebrated prelate went still farther. When asked by king Charles I, on an important occasion, "Whether he found in all antiquity that presbyters alone ordained any?" he replied, Yes; and that "he could show his majesty more than that—even that *presbyters alone had successively ordained bishops.*"¹

But the ministers of the Presbyterian church will be told, You have no title to the ministry if you cannot prove your apostolical succession. On a late occasion, to which I have already adverted, a minister of the United Church of England and Ireland publicly advanced the following statement: "*The universal history of the church concurs with the Scriptures in representing that this apostolic authority was transmitted uniformly through its officers downward. This authority has been transmitted by an unbroken succession to the bishops of our church, and thus we derive the title to our ministry.*"² We may here be permitted to observe, that we believe the ministers of the English church hold their commission by a far better tenure than that which is here described. We confess, indeed, that we entertain no high veneration for this doctrine of apostolical descent. And to show that we are not singular in this respect, we shall quote to you the sentiments of one of the greatest of the English bishops. We refer to Hooper, the cele-

¹ Neal's History of the Puritans. London, 1837. Vol. ii, pages 526, 527.

² Dr. Boyton's Sermon, page 16.

brated martyr, the bishop of Gloucester: "As concerning the ministers of the church," says he, in his Confession of Faith, (section xx,) "I believe that the church is bound to no sort of people, or *any ordinary succession of bishops*, cardinals, or such like, but unto the word of God only. * * *

I am sorry, therefore, with all my heart, to see the church of Christ degenerated into a civil policy; for even as kings of the world must naturally follow by descent from their parents in civil regimen, rule, and law, as by right they ought, even so must such as succeed in the place of bishops and priests that die, possess all gifts and earning of the Holy Ghost, to rule the church of Christ as his godly predecessor had; but the Holy Ghost must not be captive and bondman to bishops' sees and palaces." We believe, indeed, that the true church can never perish, and we believe that Christ has always had in this world a living succession of faithful ministers of his word; but we believe too that this succession has not been preserved in *any one unbroken line*, for we do not find that the Redeemer has bequeathed to any particular section of the church the promise of perpetual purity. At one time we have Augustine in Africa—again we have Claude in Italy—again we have Waldo in France—and again we have Wickliffe in England, proclaiming the message of salvation. We do not see any one church where the lamp of truth has ever continued to burn brilliantly; but yet we do not find any one period when the light has been utterly extinguished throughout all Christendom. Amidst the darkness of surrounding superstitions we may always find here or there some faithful witnesses to the doctrines of the cross.

The clergy of the established church assembled in this city on the occasion of the late triennial visitation have been addressed in the following language: “When the bishop declared to each of us at our ordination, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands,’ he committed to us a treasure to keep, and an office to fill, not of his own authority, but by an authority he received from another, commissioned to communicate that authority to him; which other himself received that power from one who preceded him; and so on, *this authority is traceable in our church to the apostles*, and through the apostles to Christ.”¹ Notwithstanding this tone of confident assertion, we do not hesitate to deny altogether the position which it sets forth. We believe that either the bishop of Rome, or the archbishop of Canterbury would find it totally impossible to prove his spiritual genealogy to the satisfaction of any inquirer of common candour and of common discernment. In order to make out his case, he must be prepared to produce the accredited registries not only of the ordinations but of the baptisms of his predecessors—he must show how his succession could be transmitted through a female pope—he must prove that there were none irregularly ordained in the line of his forerunners—and he must demonstrate how in times when pontiff excommunicated pontiff, his commission was conveyed through a pure stream of descent. And yet, if upon examination a single breach can be established, it follows, according to this doctrine, that the church

¹ Dr. Boyton’s Sermon, p. 14.—See Note G.

has no authority, that her ministers are but laymen, and that her ordinances are invalid! How absurd to peril the cause of Christianity upon the issue of such an investigation. And here we shall adduce for your consideration the sensible observations of bishop Hoadly: "I am fully satisfied," says that prelate, "that *till a consummate stupidity can be happily established* and universally spread over the land, there is nothing that tends so much to destroy all due respect to the clergy, as the demand of more than can be due to them; and nothing has so effectually thrown contempt upon a regular succession of the ministry, as the calling no succession regular but what was uninterrupted; and the making the eternal salvation of Christians to depend upon that uninterrupted succession, *of which the most learned must have the least assurance*, and the unlearned can have no notion but through ignorance and credulity."¹

When we look at what are supposed to be the *scriptural* grounds upon which the doctrine of apostolical succession is supported, we may see that they are almost too frivolous to deserve any serious consideration. There is not a single text in the sacred volume from which the principle is fairly deducible. Its advocates² are wont to adduce in its behalf such passages as the following: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx, 21.)—"How shall they preach, except they be sent." (Rom. x, 15.)—"No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb.

¹ This quotation from Hoadly is taken from Buck's Theological Dictionary, by Henderson, London, 1833, Art. Succession.

² See Dr. Boyton's Sermon, pp. 15, 17.

v, 4.)—"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2. Tim. ii, 2.) Would any unsophisticated reader, who had never heard of such an application, ever discover the doctrine of apostolical succession in such passages? Aaron was *the first* of the Jewish high priests, and, therefore, it cannot be said that he had *succession*. To allege that the *sending* mentioned in the other passages refers to apostolical descent, is a mere begging of the question. When the apostle enjoined Timothy to commit the pastoral charge to *faithful men who were qualified for the work of instruction*, it did not follow that they had authority to give a commission to successors who were *faithless and incompetent*. When the condition connected with the investiture of the trust was not observed, is it not clear that the title could not be established?

We proceed now to observe that they who seek a title to the ministry in the doctrine of apostolical succession, completely mistake the quarter where the title is to be found. When our Saviour said unto Peter, (Matt. xvi, 19,) "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," it is generally admitted that he here announced his determination to commit to the apostle the ministry of the word, and ordinances. We do not stop to advert to the circumstances which led our Lord on this occasion to address himself to Peter, neither do we now design to point out the manner in which the keys were originally distributed. We would simply remind you that the possession of these keys is at present the subject of controversy. The Church of Rome

alleges that she alone has the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The Church of England seems partly to admit the claims of the papacy, for she acknowledges the validity of her ordination, but she affirms that she also has the keys in her custody. As a Presbyterian I admit that the Church of England has the keys,¹ but I maintain that the Presbyterian church has them also in possession, and that she keeps them in better order. I deny, however, that the Church of Rome has the keys. I say to her ministers, in the language of the Son of God — “Ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” (Luke, xi, 52.) How, my friends, are you to settle this dispute? Suppose that every one of a group of individuals alleged that he had the keys of a rich treasure-house, and suppose that every one displayed keys, some of which differed from those of the others both in size and conformation, how would you arbitrate amongst the claimants? Would you investigate the history of the keys, and would you carefully try to discover how each happened to get them into his possession? Would you not at once desire the claimants to apply them to the doors, that you might ascertain whether they were fitted to the locks, and whether they could open and close the apartments? And would you not declare in favour of every candidate whose keys corresponded to the wards and commanded the bolts and admitted you to the rooms of the building? In the case before us, we regard the ministry of the word and ordinances as the keys and the

¹ See Note H.

blessings of the new covenant as the riches of the treasure-house. And if you would know the churches which have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, should you not make the trial of the gifts of their ministers — should you not observe who can open the Scriptures—who can commend themselves to your consciences by the manifestation of the truth—who, by the blessing of God resting upon their expositions of the book of inspiration, can enable you to enter into the mind of the Spirit and can make you wise unto salvation, and can inspire you with that peace which passeth all understanding? As the disciples journeyed to Emmaus they *felt* that their *unknown* fellow-traveller had the keys of the kingdom of heaven: “ They said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while *he opened to us the Scriptures?*” (Luke, xxiv, 32.) We aver then that the Church of Rome has not the keys, for she has never shown any anxiety either to preserve the purity or to promote the circulation of the Scriptures; she kept them long shut up in a dead language, and when compelled to publish them by the necessity of circumstances, she uttered them in a corrupt and barbarous translation; she has perverted their meaning by erroneous comments; she has not made the reading and the exposition of the word an essential portion of her stated ministrations; and in her acknowledged standards she has buried the glorious doctrines of the Gospel beneath the rubbish of innumerable superstitions. But we maintain that the Church of England has the keys, for to her we are indebted for that noble version of the Scriptures in which we all rejoice;¹

¹ See Note I.

in her Articles she bears faithful testimony to the great truths of evangelical religion : in point of talent and piety and learning she has ministers who would do honour to any church in Christendom—for who would dare to say that the church which has sent forth such champions as a Bedell or an Ussher is not a part of the body of Christ. As Presbyterians we object chiefly to her forms and to her framework; for we believe that she is, like David in the armour of Saul, miserably crippled by the cumbrous weight of her ecclesiastical accoutrements. Again, we affirm that the Presbyterian church has the keys of the kingdom of heaven; for her Confession is one of the best testimonies to the truth that has ever been composed; and her ministers, from Sabbath to Sabbath, exhibit to the people the treasures of the written word; and the blessing of the Lord has descended abundantly on her ordinances; and in days of rebuke and blasphemy, when she was disowned by sister churches for bearing the reproach of the Redeemer, she has gone forth to Him without the camp dripping with the blood of many thousand martyrs.

If the ministers of the Presbyterian church be asked, Where is your title to the ministry? we answer, It is not to be found amongst the *traditions of the fathers*—it is registered in the records of the word of God. We believe that every true preacher derives his title immediately from Him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. “He gave some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the mi-

nistry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv, 11, 12.) In his good providence he raises up men whom he furnishes with suitable endowments that he may send them forth with his commission. We believe that every one has a title to the pastoral office who leads an exemplary life, and who is supplied with appropriate gifts, and who is sound in the faith, and who, inspired with zeal for Christ and with love to souls, has a desire to enter into the ministry. And we believe too that every one who has these qualifications, and who receives a call from a Christian congregation to minister amongst them, has a title to preach the word and to exercise discipline, and to dispense sealing ordinances in that congregation. But some perhaps will say—Is not this a very latitudinarian doctrine? May not every one who pleases thus assume the character of a preacher? We answer—No. The *possession* of a title is one thing—the *recognition* of that title is another. A man may have a valid title to an estate, and yet it will avail him nothing if it be not recognised. It is his duty in such circumstances to apply to the proper court that he may establish his title, and that he may obtain legal possession of the property. He would only prejudice his claim were he to set the laws of his country at defiance, and to attempt to enter upon the inheritance by force. It is the business of the civil court to try his title, and to decide accordingly. And thus, too, every one who conceives he has a title to the ministry is bound to submit his claims to the ecclesiastical judicatory. In a matter of such consequence they are not to proceed without due deliberation—they are to lay hands

suddenly on no man—they are to observe his life—to test his knowledge—and to prove his gifts by a course of judicial trials. And if his title be sustained, and if he receive a call from a Christian congregation, they are then publicly to recognise his title, and regularly to invest him with the pastoral authority. But so long as the church is scripturally constituted, the man who takes upon himself the office of a public instructor without the sanction of her courts is chargeable with gross disorder, and with intolerable presumption. He declares by his conduct either that the ecclesiastical judicatories cannot, because of their corruption, be trusted with an examination of his claims, or he betrays a consciousness that his title is unsound, and that it cannot pass through the ordeal of an impartial scrutiny.

You may see, my brethren, from these statements, that an evangelical pastor does not derive his title to the ministry from the church, but from the Saviour. His qualifications are his title—the *description* of these qualifications contained in the word of God is the counterpart of his title. The church court does not *bestow* on him authority—it merely gives him *formal possession* of that authority to which he has made out a scriptural title. But how are we to act when there is no court to which we can appeal, for we have seen that any section of the visible church may completely apostatise? Under such circumstances an individual may have a good title to the ministry, and yet he may have access to no existing tribunal from which he can obtain its recognition. The ecclesiastical authorities may frown upon him *just because* he is a herald from the Son of God, and

because he testifies against them. Such was the case at the period of the Reformation. Then "all the world wondered after the beast." (Rev. xiii, 3.) Then, except in some secluded places, such as in the valleys of Piedmont, of which the rest of Christendom knew little, there was no scriptural court from which an individual could obtain a recognition of his ministerial title. What then was to be done? Was the church to remain without a ministry? Were the people to be permitted to go down in their ignorance into the pit of perdition? Surely not. Where there is no law there is no transgression. Where there is no court to which the title can be submitted, the church is not to suffer, neither is the title invalidated, because its formal recognition cannot be obtained. As Jesus does not cease to be King of Zion because the Man of Sin assumes his titles, and seeks to occupy his throne; so the true preachers of his gospel are not left without authority, because the agents of anti-christ may refuse to acknowledge their commission. The Spirit of the Lord, providing them with befitting endowments, has supplied them with a warrant which cannot be cancelled by the want of human ordination. And here we cannot quote with too much approbation, a position maintained at a public discussion, held about the beginning of the Reformation, by Zuinglius, Bucer, and other eminent Protestants at Berne. "The true church," said they, "whereof Christ is the head, *rises out of God's word*, and continues in the same, and hears the voice of no other."¹ The word of God contains the *model* according to which the church should be constructed, and the

¹ Foxe's Martyrs, by Seymour, p. 441.

word of God is the *charter* from which all ecclesiastical authority is derivable. The word of God is the *seed* out of which the church rises up into existence. The visible church in any particular locality may sink into decay, but so long as the Scriptures remain, neither the form of God's house, nor the light of its doctrines, nor the authority of its ordinances, can be lost for ever. When the ministry has become essentially corrupt—when they teach the doctrines of devils instead of the doctrines of the cross—then those of the people who may be enlightened by the Spirit, and who may be taught by God out of his word, may meet together, and throw off the yoke of their false guides, and proceed to reëstablish the courts and the ministrations of Christ according to the scriptural model. When the visible church has completely apostatised—when they who should supply sinners with refreshment from the waters of life have poisoned the wells of salvation—then, those who fear the Lord, and who alone really constitute the church, may act according to the dictates of necessity, and may themselves recognise the ministry of those who are evidently qualified by knowledge and piety and gifts. In such a case, where the sanction of the visible ministry cannot be obtained, and where it would indeed be worthless, we hold that an individual is warranted by the call of the people united with befitting gifts to enter immediately upon the exercise of all the functions of the pastoral office. And here we would remind you of the words of our Saviour: "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need and was an hungered, he and they that were with him; how he went into the house of God in

the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him." (Mark, ii, 25, 26.) Under other circumstances, the conduct of David would have been exceedingly improper; under other circumstances, he had no right to enter into the holy place and to eat of the shew-bread. But his conduct was justified by necessity. And when the church was involved in deepest darkness, and when the people were perishing for lack of knowledge, we hold that the pious Peter Waldo was warranted to enter into the house of God, and to engage in the office of the ministry, and to deal out the bread of life to himself and his perishing countrymen. And the same necessity which authorised him to undertake the pastoral vocation, also authorised him to continue in it, and to introduce others to the ministry.¹ And infinitely would we prefer ordination from such hands as those of that venerable witness-bearer, than from those of the Pope and all his cardinals. When the public magistrate proves faithless, and when he is determined to betray the interests of the commonwealth, then the citizens may take measures for their own safety, and may assume that power which he so ruinously prostitutes. When this classic city was invested, and when the chief magistrate had resolved upon a base surrender, was he not forced to flee when his projects were discovered, and were not the citizens warranted to occupy his place with braver and more trusty governors? And when the monarch himself evinced a disposition to sacrifice the good cause, was not he too obliged to

¹ See Note K.

give way to the righteous indignation of an injured people, and to abdicate the sovereignty? And had not they a right to appoint as his successor that illustrious Presbyterian, who was raised up by Providence to vindicate their principles, and to serve as the bulwark of Protestantism? And when they who were appointed to watch over the spiritual commonwealth had proved traitors to their King Messiah, and when, as at the period of the Reformation, instead of giving light to the church, they were leagued to uphold the kingdom of the prince of darkness, we hold that the Christian people had a right to act according to exigencies, and to erect the standard of the truth, and to nominate other and more faithful pastors. And if, in confirmation of these views, you attach any importance to the authority of distinguished names, we may here quote the declaration of the great and godly Cranmer: "In the New Testament," saith he, "he that is appointed a bishop or a priest, needeth not consecration by the Scripture, for election or appointment thereto is sufficient."¹

After all, however, should these statements prove unsatisfactory to the abettors of apostolical succession, we can meet them on their own grounds. We can say—if you will not admit that we are *true ministers of the Church*, unless we can show that we are *descended from the "Mother of Harlots"*—if you will not confess that we hold a commission *from Christ*, unless we can prove that we have derived this commission *from Antichrist*, then we must confess with shame that we have, even thus, as good a title as others. John Knox, the restorer of Scottish Presbyterianism, was

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox. First edition,—pp. 427, 428.

ordained a priest in the Church of Rome.¹ If he had apostolical descent, so have we his successors; for we have seen that presbyters can ordain. Besides, history records that the bishops of the English church were concerned in the ordination of the *greater number* of the Presbyterian ministers who settled originally in Ireland.² Thus, did we attach any worth to such a title, we can show that we, *at least as well as others*, can trace our descent either immediately through the Church of Rome, or mediately through the Church of England.

We may here take occasion to observe that the Church of England has, in several cases of importance, admitted the validity of Presbyterian ordination. Thus, in the year 1618, the bishop of Llandaff, and several others of her dignitaries, appeared as her representatives in the Presbyterian Synod of Dort.³ They there held ministerial communion with the Dutch divines, sitting in the Assembly as other presbyters, and acknowledging the government of a Presbyterian moderator. And in the earlier times of Irish Presbyterianism, when ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland came over to this country they were at once admitted to parishes, and acknowledged by the bishops as authorised pastors.

It may perhaps be expected that, on an occasion like this, we should support the views we have advanced by testimonies from the fathers. We do not, however, admit that such proofs are by any means necessary. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is our

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox. First Edition,—page 11.

² See Note L.

³ Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i, page 465.

statute book. If we can show that Presbyterianism is the ecclesiastical system sanctioned in the New Testament, it matters not though all the uninspired writings of antiquity were arrayed against us. A single text of the Word of God should come home with greater power to the Christian than the united affirmations of all the councils and all the fathers. It is apparent from Scripture that corruptions were very early introduced into the church; and if we would know the truth, we should go to the pure fountainhead of our religion. We enjoy many advantages which the fathers wanted; and it would not be difficult to demonstrate that Christians of the present day are placed in as favourable circumstances for discovering the mind of the Spirit, as the fathers of even the second century. The fathers were persons of various characters and of various degrees of information. Some of them were individuals of very weak intellect; their works are exceedingly voluminous, and it would require an ordinary life-time to examine them all with any great degree of accuracy. The fathers frequently differ amongst themselves, insomuch that there is almost *no truth or no heresy* which may not be recommended by quotations from some of them. Besides, the works of the fathers are extremely rare—they are only to be found in the libraries of the learned; so that the mass of the people have not an opportunity of judging for themselves as to the original bearing of those extracts which may be produced from them.

You are not, my brethren, to infer from these remarks that the evidence of the early Christian fathers is hostile to Presbyterianism. We believe that the contrary is the case. We can show, for instance,

that the testimony of Clemens Romanus, who stands at the head of the apostolic fathers, is decidedly in our favour. Thus Clemens writes of the apostles: "Preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions to be bishops and deacons over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit. Nor was this any new thing, seeing that long before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scriptures in a certain place, (Isa. lx, 17,) 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.' And what wonder if they, to whom such a work was committed by God in Christ, *established such officers as we before mentioned*, when even that blessed and faithful servant in all his house, Moses, set down in the Holy Scriptures *all things* that were commanded him." ¹ Here Clemens expressly limits the office-bearers of the church to two orders, bishops and deacons. What a decisive statement from one whom the Church of Rome considers one of her pontiffs! He thus fairly disclaims all pretensions to the chair of the papacy, and acknowledges, like Peter before him, that he also was but one of the presbyters. ²

In a volume of "Sermons on the Church," ³ which has lately issued from the press, several statements are produced in behalf of episcopacy, as if from the pen of Ignatius, another of the apostolic fathers. The respected author of these discourses has not, however, informed the public that very serious doubts

¹ Epistle to the Corinthians, sections 42, 43.

² See 1 Pet. v, 1.—See also Note M.

³ By the Rev. A. Boyd, A.M.

hang over the claims of these Ignatian epistles. If they be not altogether forgeries, it is at least beyond all controversy that they have been shamefully interpolated. And we cannot conceive what could have tempted a pious Protestant minister in a Protestant cathedral to bring forward in aid of his cause such an admonition as the following: "Let all reverence the deacons *as Jesus Christ*, and the bishop *as the Father*, and the presbyters *as the Sanhedrim of God and college of the apostles*"! Of such a testimony it is difficult to say whether it deserves to be rejected more for its *absurdity* or for its *impiety*. Can any one seriously believe that a well-instructed individual, who had conversed with the apostles, ever penned such outrageous profanity? Is it not rather to be viewed as the production of a period when the Man of Sin was exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, and when it was deemed needful to frame such blasphemies in order to prop up his unhallowed pretensions? How different such drivelling from the sturdy theology of Paul: "*Though we,*" said he, "*or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*"¹

It is a fact well worthy of consideration, that a number of most remarkable characters who have appeared in the Christian church at different times, and who must have pursued separate courses of investigation, and who, from peculiar circumstances, must have been most intimately acquainted with the Sacred writings, have testified in favour of Presbyterianism. Thus Jerome, who lived towards the conclusion of the

¹ See Note N.

fourth century, and who was the first to translate the Scriptures out of the original languages into Latin, and who is regarded as one of the most learned, perhaps the most learned of all the fathers, has asserted its scripturality. He declares "A bishop and a presbyter are the same, and before there were, through the devil's instinct, divisions in religion, and the people began to say, I am of Paul and I of Apollos and I of Cephas, the churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters." And again, "As, therefore, the presbyters know, that *by the custom of the church*, they are subject to him who is set over them; so let the bishops know that they are greater than the presbyters *rather by custom, than the truth of the Lord's disposition or ordering.*"¹

Wickliffe is another extraordinary character who supported Presbyterian principles. He lived about a thousand years after Jerome, and has been called *the morning star of the reformation*. He was, if not the first, at least one of the first who translated the Scriptures into English. In his own day he was held in high reputation for his learning, being Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford. His declaration for only two orders of office-bearers in the church is very decided: "One thing I boldly assert," said Wickliffe, "that in the primitive church, or in the time of the apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient, viz., priest and deacon; and I do also say that, in the time of Paul, a priest and a bishop were one and the same; for in those times, the distinct orders of pope, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, officials, and deans, were not invented."²

¹ Jerome in Tit.

² Neal, i, 3,—note.

As another distinguished advocate of Presbyterianism, we would refer to the celebrated Calvin. There are some, indeed, who are wont to speak with disrespect of the views and the character of that Reformer; but his gainsayers are either prejudiced against his sentiments or unacquainted with his history. It has been admitted by the highest authorities that Calvin was the most learned of all the Reformers. Though an humble presbyter, he exerted in his generation a preponderating influence throughout Protestant Christendom, and the reformed princes of Europe, in matters pertaining to the church, were wont to seek his advice and approbation. And indeed, when we consider the depth of his piety, and the sublimity of his genius, and the vigour of his judgment, and his immense acquisitions as a theologian of profound and varied scholarship, we must regard him as the brightest star in that bright constellation of divines which shone at the era of the Reformation. The deliberate decision of such a man as Calvin is entitled to no common consideration. It is said in the "Sermons on the Church," (pp. 70, 71,) "Calvin himself was compelled to acknowledge, that for the first fourteen hundred years after Christ no Christian church could be found without its presiding bishop;" but, if a *bishop in the prelatie sense* be understood, we deny fearlessly and flatly that Calvin ever made a statement so much at variance with his well known principles.¹

We may here add that some of the most eminent fathers of the English church have been decidedly partial to Presbyterianism. It has been said "The

¹ See Note O.

object” of the British Reformers “was to bring back the British church to its former purity, by removing the rubbish and additions which defaced the spiritual building.”¹ It may be added, “If the first English Reformers, including the Protestant bishops, had been left to their own choice,—if they had not been held back by the dead weight of a large mass of popishly-affected clergy in the reign of Edward, and restrained by the supreme civil authority on the accession of Elizabeth, they would have brought the government and worship of the Church of England nearly to the pattern of the other Reformed churches.”² You have heard of Latimer, and Hooper, and Cranmer, and it can be shown that all these men were inclined to Presbyterian principles. Cranmer has recorded his opinion that “bishops and priests were at one time, and were no two things, but both *one office* in the beginning of Christ’s religion.”³ In the days of Edward VI, *thirteen bishops*, with a great number of other ecclesiastics, subscribed this proposition—“In the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops.”⁴

In drawing these observations to a close, we would say to Presbyterians, let it be your care to vindicate the claims of your church by a practical exhibition of the power of godliness. Let your light so shine before men that others may recognise you as the followers of Jesus. It is recorded for our instruc-

¹ Sermons on the Church, p. 145.

² M’Crie’s Life of Knox, 1st ed. pp. 84, 85.

³ Idem. p. 427.

⁴ Idem. p. 427.

tion that he said—"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John, xv, 14.) It is by walking in the way of his testimonies that you can best establish your title to the character of a church of Christ. Be then humble and watchful—walk by faith—be instant in prayer—be ready to every good word and work—be zealous in the advancement of religion at home—be willing to contribute to its propagation abroad. And we would say to persons of all denominations, remember that, under God, your spiritual prosperity must depend greatly upon the ministrations you enjoy. It has indeed been intimated that to be placed within the sphere of a minister of the Established church is a sufficient indication of God's will—"a sufficient proof that it is thus God intends to convey the appointed means of salvation."¹ Where the minister is regarded as being truly of God's appointment, says the same authority, "men would under such circumstances be better disposed to be satisfied with the pastors appointed to them." Ministers may, however, be appointed by men and yet may not be chosen of the Lord. Take heed then to the advice of the apostle John: "Beloved," says he, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John, iv, 1.) It belongs indeed to the ecclesiastical governors to invest others with the pastoral office, but the people are not thereby divested of the privilege of thinking for themselves. They too are to "prove all things," and to "hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. v, 21.) And if it be asked—

¹ Dr. Boyton's Sermon, p. 20.

How are we to come to a safe decision? we reply, the marks of a faithful minister have been described by the Redeemer himself. We find him saying in the Sermon on the Mount—"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. *Ye shall know them by their fruits*—do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" and again he says—"Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them.*" (Matt. vii, 15, 16, 20.) Our Lord does not affirm—ye shall discover them by their *genealogy*—ye shall know them by their *apostolical succession*. He was aware that the body of the people could not apply such a test. They have not time, neither are they fitted by education to search out the records and the monuments of antiquity, that they may decide on such a subject. And we are expressly enjoined not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying." (1 Tim. i, 4.) Our Lord has supplied us with a far more simple and satisfactory criterion. You may know ministers by their fruits. Observe their *conduct*, that you may see whether they display any thing of the mind of Christ—mark their *teaching*, that you may ascertain whether they declare the whole counsel of God. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii, 20.) And surely you may reasonably anticipate that your growth in grace will be better promoted by the pastoral instructions of a man of God who is mighty in the Scriptures than by the services of a prayerless, worldly-minded, ignorant, and immoral minister. Again, my friends, we

would beseech you all to cultivate a catholic spirit. Think not that merely because you are Presbyterians you are therefore better than others. There are many members of the Independent and Episcopal churches whom the Son of God has delighted to honour, and who shall doubtless shine throughout all eternity, as pearls in his royal diadem. Our forms of government and discipline are but perishable barriers by which the various sections of the church are now separated, but at death these partitions fall asunder, and the faithful in the world above are all one in Christ Jesus for ever. The Saviour will certainly honour his own ordinances, and, other things being equal, we may expect to find the purest piety where the Redeemer is worshipped according to the purest forms; but still we are not to trust to our privileges—we are not to worship the temple, instead of the God of the temple. Love is the essence of Christianity, and a Presbyterian church, where the life of piety is wanting, is a temple from which the glory has departed. Again, whilst Presbyterians act towards others in a spirit of expansive charity, and whilst they acknowledge that their ecclesiastical arrangements are not of such importance as the more enduring treasures of the new covenant, let them not imagine that they may therefore disregard the peculiarities of their religious system. Every thing is precious which the Redeemer has ordained. As Presbyterians consider that their own church is more perfect than others in her constitution, let them bestow upon her more abundant honour. Let them cleave steadfastly to her ordinances; let them not be seduced from her apostolic forms by the pageantry

or the profits of a more gorgeous establishment. A good conscience is a constant feast; and let not Presbyterians sell, for any of the beggarly elements of this world, even the smallest portion of their birth-right as citizens of Zion. Lastly, my friends, let us all remember that the Gospel must be to every one of us, either the savour of life unto life or the savour of death unto death. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God? Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound of the Gospel, and blessed are the pastors who can say to the people of their charge—"Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? ye are our epistle, written in our hearts—known and read of all men, forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us—written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God—not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." (2 Cor. i, 1—3.) May the Lord make us all monuments of his grace, and fit us for his glory. And to him be all blessing and praise for ever. Amen.

NOTES TO DISCOURSE I.

NOTE A.

IN the text the words, "broadly *insinuated*," are used advisedly, for though Dr. Boyton has not expressly *named* the Presbyterians in his attack, it is quite clear from the whole scope of his discourse that they are intended. Speaking of apostolic descent, he says, (page 16,) "*We are living among* one class of religionists who depreciate this view of the ministry, and another class of religionists who, by their apostacy and corruption, bring it into discredit." The Presbyterians and Roman Catholics must of course be here understood. In this discourse Dr. Boyton speaks of nonconformists as "*religionists*," and as "*dissenting bodies*," but I do not find that he even once acknowledges any of them as a *church*. Referring in his notes to the minister of an English dissenting congregation, he styles him "*the creature* of their own election and *ordination*." Does he suppose that the dissenting laity of England are in the habit of *ordaining* their own ministers? He adduces a single quotation from Dr. Chalmers; but almost all his arguments and illustrations in support of establishments are taken *without acknowledgment* from the writings of that eminent divine.

Our subject does not require us to enter upon a general examination of the merits of Dr. Boyton's Sermon. We would here, however, take occasion to remark, that its doctrinal statements are throughout distinguished by an air of mysticism. He very fairly exposes the evils of a fastidious taste, as exhibited amongst the English Congregationalists; but does he think that the censorious will not venture to criticise the sermons of a minister who has episcopal ordination? We have observed that in

his quotations from Scripture he has frequently mutilated and spoiled the authorised version.

NOTE B.

In Beza's New Testament the passage, Acts, xiv, 23, is thus rendered: "Cùm que ipsis per suffragia creassent per singulas ecclesias Presbyteros"—*i. e.* *And when they had by votes created to them presbyters in every church.* In Cranmer's Bible, when divested of its antiquated orthography, it stands thus: "And when they had ordained them elders by election in every congregation."

In ancient times some of the Athenian magistrates were called *Χειροτονηται*, because elected by the people to their office by a show of hands.—See Parkhurst's Lexicon.

In the Ignatian Epistles, the verb *Χείροτονείω* is repeatedly applied to cases of popular election. Thus, *Πρέπον ἐστὶν ὑμῖν ὡς ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ, χειροτονῆσαι διάκονον, ἰ. ε.,* It is fitting for you, as a church of God, to elect a deacon.—Epistle to the Philadelphians.

In Eusebius the noun *Χειροτονια* has a similar meaning. Thus, in reference to the appointment of Fabianus to the bishopric of Rome, we read, "all the brethren having been collected on account of the election (*χειροτονίας ἐνεκεν*) of a successor to the bishopric," &c.—Eusebius, Book vi, chapter 28.

NOTE C.

The following testimonies amply establish the fact stated in the text:

Milner, of the Church of England, after observing that the apostles ordained successors, "without any consultation of the respective flocks over which they were about to preside"—a statement which we have already disproved, adds, "But as it was neither reasonable nor probable that any set of persons after them should be regarded as their equals, this method of appointing ecclesiastical rulers did not continue, and undoubtedly the election of bishops devolved on the people. Their appearance to vote on

these occasions ; their constraining of persons sometimes to accept the office against their will ; and the determination of Pope Leo, long after, against forcing a bishop on a people against their consent, *demonstrate this.*—Milner's History of the Church of Christ, Cent. iii, chap. xx.

Mosheim, speaking of the state of the Church in the *second* century, says,—“ One inspector or bishop presided over each Christian assembly, *to which office he was elected by the voices of the whole people.*”—Eccles. Hist. Cent. ii, Part ii, chap. ii. Again, speaking of the state of matters in the *fourth* century, he says, “ *The people, therefore, continued as usual to choose freely their bishops and their teachers.*”—Eccles. Hist. Cent. iv, Part ii, chap. ii. It is worthy of remark that Mosheim has been adopted as the text book in Trinity College, Dublin.

Du Pin, a Roman Catholic historian, admits, that so late as the *sixth* century, the rights of the people were in some degree respected even by the Roman pontiff. Speaking of Pope Gregory, he says, “ St. Gregory does not meddle with choosing the bishops of the churches depending upon his metropolis, but leaves the clergy *and people* the liberty of election.”—Du Pin's History, folio, Dublin, 1723, vol. i, page 567.

NOTE D.

Inasmuch as it is intimated that Timothy was ordained “ *with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,*” some Episcopalians have alleged that the imposition of the hands of the presbyters was merely an accidental *accompaniment* of ordination. But that the preposition here employed (*μετα*) denotes the *instrument* must be evident by a reference to other passages where it occurs in the New Testament. See Acts, xiv, 27 ; Acts, xiii 17, &c.

We may here observe, that the laying on of hands in ordination is a very expressive ceremony. It denotes, 1st, *Dedication to God.* The priests of old laid their hands upon the head of the sacrifice when it was about to be offered. Exod. xxix, 10 ; Num. viii, 12. In ordination ministers are solemnly *devoted* to God ; *set apart*, or *separated*, to his service, that they may *give themselves to prayer and the dispensation of the word.* This form implies, 2dly,

Invocation of blessing. After this manner Jacob pronounced his patriarchal benediction upon Ephraim and Manasseh, Gen. xviii, 14. Thus too the presbytery implore the divine blessing upon the minister ordained. Laying on of hands denotes, 3rdly, *Investiture with office.* In this way Moses inaugurated Joshua. Num. xxvii, 18-23. Thus also the presbytery commit the pastoral authority to those whom they ordain.

NOTE E.

Paul's call was extraordinary, and he had now for a considerable time been engaged in the work of the ministry; but to put honour upon the rite of ordination, God upon this occasion required that he should be solemnly set apart by the laying on of hands. This is the most circumstantial account of an ordination in the New Testament; and it has doubtless been recorded for the special instruction of the church. Though an *apostle* was ordained, every one must see that the service was conducted upon purely Presbyterian principles.

NOTE F.

It is said (Tit. i, 5,) "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders* in every city as I had appointed thee." The word (*Καθίστημι*) here translated *ordain*, signifies merely to *appoint, constitute, or establish.* We are not to suppose that the elders of Crete were *not elected* by the people, for we have every reason to adopt a contrary opinion. The very *same word* is used when the apostles say respecting the deacons, (Acts, vi, 5,) "Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom *we may appoint* over this business." We may conclude, therefore, from the sameness of the phraseology, that the *same mode of nomination* was observed in both cases. The following remarks of Stillingfleet show that the verb *Καθίστημι*, according to ecclesiastical usage, denotes *appointment by suffrage.* Speaking of a Canon of the council of Nice, in which the word occurs, he says—"Because the signification of

the Greek word is ambiguous, we shall first see what sense *Greek writers* do put upon it. Balsamon interprets *Καθίστασθαι*, by *Ψηφίζεσθαι*, which is *choosing by suffrage*; and he, in plain terms, saith, by this canon the right of *election* was taken from the people, and given to the bishops of the province; and it is not Balsamon alone, as some imagine, that was of that opinion, but Zonaras, Aristenus, Mattheus Blasteres, as any one may find." Stillingfleet's *Origines Britannicæ*, chap. iii.

NOTE G.

It is extraordinary that Dr. Boyton, who has certainly some literary character to lose, should commit himself to statements such as those quoted in the text. Were it not that his Discourse was addressed to the lord primate and the assembled clergy, we might have been almost tempted to suspect that he had been calculating largely upon the ignorance and credulity of his auditors. How absurd for any one to say that he can trace the succession in *any church* to the apostles. We cannot prove from the New Testament that *the twelve* ordained any except *the seven deacons*. It has been candidly acknowledged by her ablest advocates, that the succession *cannot be traced* in the Church of England. Thus the learned Stillingfleet says—"By the loss of records of the British churches, we cannot draw down the succession of bishops from the apostle's time." And again—"We cannot deduce a lineal succession of bishops, as they could in other churches, where writings were preserved."—*Origines Britannicæ*, chap. ii. We presume that this very cautious decision of the bishop of Worcester is entitled to quite as much respect as the assertion of the rector of Tullyaghinish. History seems to teach that English episcopacy must trace its parentage to Scottish Presbytery. In the Preface to Sir James Dalrymple's "Collections of Scottish History" we read as follows: "The second head is concerning the mission by the abbot and monks of this monastery (Icolmkill,) to convert the Northumbrian Saxons to the Christian faith; and the appointing and *ordaining bishops* or doctors for these churches, from whose disciples and *by whose ordinations more churches were planted and bishops and doctors were established in the other Saxon*

kingdoms, which Saxon churches of the Scottish institution did drown the authority of the pope and bishop of Rome, and for a long time did maintain the differences betwixt these and the Roman Saxon churches, which at last prevailed over all the Saxon churches." We learn from the history of the venerable Bede, that bishop Aidan, or Aedan, who conducted the mission to the English, had nothing more than presbyterian ordination. Bede states, that king Oswald, who had already embraced Christianity, sent to the *elders of the Scots* (misit ad majores natu Scottorum) for a prelate to evangelize his subjects. The historian adds, that this prelate was sent from the island Hii or Iona, and the monastery of Icolmkill." (Ab hâc ergo insulâ, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad provinciam Anglorum iustituendam in Christo, missus est Aedan, accepto gradu Episcopatus.) At this time, about the year 633, Segeni or Segenius, the abbot of the monastery, was only a *presbyter*. (Quo tempore eidem Monasterio Segeni Abbas et Presbyter præfuit.) We find, indeed, from Bede, that the abbot of this monastery was always only in priest's orders, though, according to this writer, bishops were subject to his jurisdiction. (Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper Abbatem presbyterum cujus juri et omnis provincia, et ipsi etiam Episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subjecti, juxta exemplum primi Doctoris illius, qui non episcopus sed presbyter extitit et Monachus.) Bede further declares that Aedan was appointed missionary to the English *in an assembly of the elders*, (in conventu Seniorum), and that he was ordained a bishop by the same assembly. (Ipsum esse dignum Episcopatu, ipsum ad erudiendos incredulos et indoctos mitti debere deecomunia, qui gratiâ discretionis, quæ virtutum mater est, ante omnia probatur imbutus; sicque illum ordinantes, ad prædicandum miserunt.) Bædæ Historia Ecclesiastica. Cantabrigiæ MDCCXXII, p. 105—108. We learn from these statements that Aedan was ordained or consecrated by an assembly of elders, in which a presbyter presided. We know, that in former times it was not unusual for presbyters to consecrate bishops. Jerome states, that the presbyters of Alexandria chose and made their own bishops from the days of Mark till those of Heraclius and Dionysius. (Epist. ad Evagranu.) Thus, indeed, Prelacy must have originally emanated from Presbytery. It is manifest, from the history of Bede, that

the *apostolical authority*, which, according to Dr. Boyton, is traceable in his church to the apostles, has been derived from a Scottish presbytery.

It would be no difficult matter to point out many other breaches in the episcopal chain. Since the Reformation, the English bishops have consecrated not a few who before had received only presbyterian ordination. Such was the case with the Scottish bishops in 1610. We believe that the supporters of apostolical succession conceive that the *Irish* branch of the English church stands upon a very firm foundation, inasmuch as so many Romish bishops conformed in Ireland at the time of the Reformation. It is said, however, that Christianity was introduced into Ireland from England: and if, as stated by Stillingfleet, the English succession cannot be traced, the Irish must of course labour under the same difficulty. In the dark ages we want many links of the chain. Sir James Ware, in his "Prelates of Ireland," makes the following statements respecting the see of Armagh: "St. Bernard, in the Life of St. Malachy, affirms, that 'Celsus being near his death, was solicitous that Malachy Morgair, then bishop of Connor, should succeed him, and sent his staff to him as his successor.' Nor was he disappointed, for Malachy succeeded him, though not immediately, for 'one Maurice, son of Donald, a person of noble birth, for five years (says the same Bernard) by secular power held that church in possession, not as a bishop, but a tyrant; for the ambition of some in power had at that time introduced a diabolical custom of pretending to ecclesiastical sees by hereditary succession; not suffering any bishops but the descendants of their own family. *Nor was this kind of execrable succession of short continuance: for fifteen generations (or successions of bishops, as Colgan has it) had succeeded in that manner; and so far had that evil and adulterate generation confirmed the wicked course that sometimes, though clerks of their blood might fail, yet bishops never failed.* In fine, eight married men, and *without orders*, though scholars, were predecessors to Celsus, from whence proceeded that general dissolution of ecclesiastical discipline (whereof we have spoken largely before,) that contempt of censures, and decay of religion, throughout Ireland.' Thus Bernard. The names of those *eight married men unordained*, Colgan delivers in the place above cited."—Bishops of Armagh, p. 9.

If such irregularities occurred in the primate's see, we may conclude that it would be somewhat difficult to trace the succession in other dioceses where Sir James Ware has not been able to ascertain *even the names of the bishops for centuries together*.—See his “Bishops of Rapho.”

We may infer, from these disclosures, that if Dr. Boyton have no other title to the ministry save that which is drawn from the unbroken line of apostolical succession, he may, as one of those “who do not hold the commission,” forthwith divest himself of the clerical character.

NOTE H.

Some may imagine that the Church of England wants *two* of the keys of the kingdom, namely, the key of government and the key of discipline, but she can scarcely be said to have altogether lost these keys, though they are not certainly in the hands in which they ought to be deposited. The key of discipline is held by the bishops' courts, and the key of government is in the hand of the Queen. It is observed in the “Sermons on the Church,” p. 136, that the “*topic of discipline* is adverted to *in almost every epistle*, and strict and definite rules laid down for the church's guidance;” and yet, in the “Essays on the Church,” a work so highly commended by Mr. Boyd, it is acknowledged that “the Church has allowed her discipline to be *entirely relaxed and disused*.”—Essays on the Church, p. 204.

NOTE I.

The translators of the Scriptures availed themselves of the help of several previous translations. Amongst others, they were instructed to consult the Geneva Bible, in the translation of which John Knox was concerned. Whilst the general excellence of the present authorised version is admitted, Presbyterians have reason to complain that in the preparation of a work in which they were so deeply interested, they were not permitted to exercise a legitimate influence. At the time when it was executed, there were many English and Irish Puritan divines, as well as many Scottish Presbyterian ministers, fully equal, in point of scholarship, to the

episcopal translators. As instances, we may mention Travers the Puritan, who was provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and tutor to Archbishop Ussher, and the celebrated Andrew Melville of Scotland, who was one of the most accomplished linguists in Christendom. King James, however, not only committed the translation to episcopal hands, but also put those employed under certain definite restrictions as to the rendering of various ecclesiastical terms, in order to have the version more favourable to his own views of government and discipline.

NOTE K.

Speaking of the conviction which many probably felt in the time of Waldo, that the extraordinary circumstances of the case "justified his assumption of the pastoral character," Milner adds in a note—"If Waldo's friends reasoned right in this, as *I am inclined to think they did*, arguing from the necessity of the case, and the strength of that divine aphorism, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' let not, however, such extraordinary cases give a sanction to many self-created teachers, who disturb rather than strengthen the hands of faithful pastors by their irregular proceedings."—Milner's Hist. Cent. xiii, Chap. i.

We subjoin upon the same subject, the following plain and pithy observations, from the works of the Rev. Joseph Boyse, a Presbyterian minister of Dublin, who lived in the beginning of the last century.

"What if all the present pastors in a nation should corrupt the Christian doctrine and worship, and *impose* those corruptions on the people as terms of *Church communion*? What if they refuse to ordain any that will not join with them herein? The people dare not comply with those terms, and because they would not live without the advantages of the public ministry and worship, they invite such to take the pastoral care of their souls as are duly qualified; that such qualified persons should not accept ordination on such wicked terms is past doubt; but what if they live so remote from any other Christian kingdom that they cannot have ministerial ordination elsewhere? Will any say that in this case those qualified persons, for want of this ordination, ought not to take on them the pastoral charge of those people,

which God has given them such abilities for, and such a call by his providence to? To say this were to set up *the rule about the regular ordering* of the ministry above *the end of the ministry* itself, and oppose the circumstances of the duty to the substance of it. Whereas positive precepts must always yield to moral, and matters of mere ordination to the end of the duty ordered, and the former must never be pleaded against the latter. Ordination by pastors is not, therefore, there necessary, where it cannot be had without sin, and yet without a ministry, the interests of the Gospel, and the salvation of souls are like to suffer the most visible prejudice and detriment. For these are matters infinitely more precious and valuable than any rules of external order, and the very end those rules aim at and are subservient to. And if this be not granted, it must be left to the pleasure of such corrupt pastors, whether the people who cannot join in communion with them shall enjoy the means of their salvation, or be obliged to live, like atheists, without any public worship of God. And he that asserts this may next assert that God has left it to their pleasure whether the people shall be saved or damned, and that 'tis better they should be canonically damned than uncanonically saved."—Impartial Reflections, &c., By Joseph Boyse.

NOTE L.

In Dr. Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, a work with which every Irish Presbyterian should be acquainted, we have the following account of the ordination of Blair, given by himself:

"Having been invited to preach, by the patron and by Mr. Gibson, the sick incumbent, (the first Protestant dean of Down, but resident at Bangor,) I yielded to their invitation and preached there three Sabbath days. After that, several of the aged and most respectful persons in the congregation came to me, by order of the whole, and informed me that they were edified by the doctrine delivered by me; intreated me not to leave them; and promised, if the patron's offer of maintenance was not large enough, they would willingly add to the same. This promise, I slighted, being too careless of competent and comfortable provision, for I had no thought of any greater family than a boy or

two to serve me. But on the former part of that speech, importing the congregation's call, I laid great weight; and it did contribute more to the removing of my unwillingness to settle there than anything else. Likewise the dying man (Gibson) did several ways encourage me. He professed great sorrow for his having been a dean. He condemned episcopacy more strongly than ever I durst do; he charged me in the name of Christ, and as I expected his blessing on my ministry, not to leave that good way wherein I had begun to walk; and then drawing my head towards his bosom with both his arms, he laid his hands on my head and blessed me. Within a few days after he died; and my admission was accomplished as quickly as might be, in the following way. The viscount Claneboy, my noble patron, did, on my request, inform the bishop, how opposite I was to episcopacy and their liturgy, and had the influence to procure my admission on easy and honourable terms. Yet, lest his lordship had not been plain enough, I declared my opinion fully to the bishop at our first meeting, and found him yielding beyond my expectation. The bishop said to me—"I hear good of you, and will impose no conditions on you; I am old and can teach you ceremonies, and you can teach me substance, only I must ordain you, else neither I nor you can answer the law nor brook the land." I answered him, that his sole ordination did utterly contradict my principles; but he replied both wittily and submissively, "whatever you account of episcopacy, yet I know you account a presbytery to have divine warrant: will you not receive ordination from Mr. Cunningham and the adjacent brethren, and let me come in among them, in no other relation than a presbyter?" This I could not refuse, and so the matter was performed," on the 10th of July, 1623."—Reid's History, vol. I, p. 102—104.

Neal adds—"Thus was Mr. Blair ordained publicly, in the church of Bangor. The bishop of Raphoe did the same for Mr. Levingston, and all the Scots who were ordained in Ireland, from this time to the year 1642, were ordained after the same manner. All of them enjoyed the churches and tithes, though they remained Presbyterian and used not the liturgy; nay, the bishops consulted them about affairs of common concernment to

the church, and some of them were members of the Convocation in 1634."—*Hist. of Puritans*, vol I, p. 460.

NOTE M.

In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Clemens speaks of those "who had the rule over them," (Sect. i,) and of "the elders" set over them, (Sect. liv,) but he does not even once refer to a person of higher dignity. Had there been a bishop, in the prelatial sense, in the Church of Corinth, would he have been thus completely overlooked? It is, indeed, admitted by divines of the Church of England, who are, in no small degree, tinged with the prejudices of their party, that the testimony of Clemens is completely in favour of presbytery. Thus, Milner says—"At first, indeed, and for some time, church governors were only of two ranks, presbyters and deacons. At least, this appears to have been the case in particular instances, as at Philippi, and at Ephesus, and the term bishop was confounded with that of presbyter. The Church of Corinth continued long in this state as far as one may judge by Clemens' Epistle."—*History of the Church of Christ*, Cent. ii, chap. i.

NOTE N.

It is somewhat remarkable that Presbyterians as well as Prelatists have been wont to appeal to the Ignatian Epistles in support of their system. (See Miller on the Constitution of the Church, &c.) Presbyterians allege that the Ignatian bishop, in the extent of his diocese, corresponded to a parish minister. He had only one congregation under his care, for all his flock were expected to assemble in one place for worship, and for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The bishop was to baptize—to be consulted respecting the marriages of all the individuals under his care—and to be acquainted with all the men-servants and maid-servants. It is rather extraordinary that Mr. Boyd should refer to these Epistles. In his Sermon on Episcopacy, he wishes to prove that the *bishops* are the successors of the *apostles*, but these letters directly contradict his favourite theory, for they uniformly recognise the *presbyters* as the successors of the apostles. It does not

appear that the bishop could act without the sanction of the presbytery, for the people are frequently exhorted to be subject to the bishop *and to the presbytery*, and the presbytery is styled “the Sauehedrim of the bishop.” (Epistle to the Philadelphians.) Besides, how can an Episcopalian be *subject to the presbytery*? There is no such court invested with a peculiar jurisdiction connected with the Established Church of this country.

It is, however, absurd to found any argument upon these documents. Many learned men, such as Calvin, Blondel, the Centuriators, Salmasius, and Daillé, maintain that they are completely spurious. At all events, they have been so much interpolated, that it is now perhaps impossible to separate the fictitious from the genuine. Mosheim declares—“So considerable a degree of obscurity hangs over the question respecting the authenticity of not only a part, but the whole of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, as to render it altogether a case of much intricacy and doubt.” (Commentary, by Vindal, i, 276.) Again, he observes—“The letters, come from what pen they may, are indisputably of very ancient date, and that they are *not altogether forgeries*, is in the highest degree credible. But to ascertain with precision the exact extent to which they may be considered as genuine, appears to me to be beyond the reach of all human penetration.” (Commentary, by Vindal, i, 278.) Neander describes them as “interpolated by some one who was prejudiced in favour of the hierarchy.” (Church History, by Rose, i, 199.) Archbishop Ussher, in his Preliminary Dissertation to his edition of these Epistles, published at Oxford in 1644, thus speaks of them, (page 138)—“Concludimus, earum sex nothas, totidem alias mixtas, nullas omni ex parte sinceras esse habendas et genuinas,” that is, “we conclude that six of them are spurious, that as many others are interpolated, that none of them are to be considered in every part pure and genuine.” He afterwards published at London, in 1647, what he called “Appendix Ignatiana,” in which he professed to give a genuine copy of these letters. “Ignatii Epistolæ genuinæ, a posterioris interpolatoris assumptis liberæ, ex Græco Mediceo exemplari expressæ; et novâ versione Latinâ explicatæ.” He complains, however, in his Preface, “to the Reader,” that he had *not* found the Medicean manuscript most correct. “Id tantum de quo jam conqueramur, habemus; *non reperisse* nos Medi-

ceum codicem qualem eum nobis Turrianus commendaverat, *emendatissimum.*" We find, too, that in doubtful passages, he has made use of the *conjectures* of Junius and Vossius. It so happens that Mr. Boyd, in the quotation which we have cited in the text, has unfortunately stumbled upon a passage which Archbishop Ussher himself acknowledges to be of doubtful authority. The literal rendering of Ussher's Greek text is as follows:—"In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ, as also the bishop *being Son of the Father*, (*ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐπισκοπον ὄντα υἱον τοῦ πατρὸς*) and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God and college of the apostles." The archbishop does not venture to translate his own text, but betakes himself to a marginal reading, the same as that which Mr. Boyd has adopted. If the authority of this passage be tried by the evidence of manuscripts, and if it may be condemned because the witnesses agree not together, it must certainly be rejected as spurious. In the editions of Ussher, it is to be found, *in at least four forms, all widely differing from one another.* (See his Dissertation, page 129, and the text of 1644 and 1647.) Upon the ground of internal evidence, it must at once be set aside, for who can believe that a pious pupil of any of the apostles ever dictated such disgusting trash? It is the extravagance of folly to rely upon these epistles as evidences either of the *doctrine* or of the government of the apostolic church, for, even as edited by Ussher, they still bear clear traces of an interpolator, who was an abettor of Arianism, as well as a supporter of the hierarchy. They contain, indeed, some devout and noble sentiments worthy of a disciple of the apostles, but they abound also with turgid exhortations to ecclesiastical servility, quite disgraceful to any right-minded Christian.

We have observed that Ussher has recognised only *six* of the Ignatian Epistles. Vossius and Archbishop Wake here differ from him, and acknowledge as a *seventh* the epistle to Polycarp. Eusebius intimates that Ignatius wrote seven epistles in his journey to Rome—*four* from Smyrna, and *three* from Troas. Mr. Boyd, however, has the honour of starting a new theory upon this subject. Differing from all the learned men who have gone before him, he only acknowledges *four* epistles as written by Ignatius on his way to the imperial city. He has mentioned *three* of them in his Sermon on Episcopacy, but inasmuch as he says that these letters were written to different *churches*, we presume that he does not reckon the epistle to the virgin Mary as the *fourth*.

NOTE O.

Calvin, in his last will and testament, avers his adherence to the principles which he had professed throughout life, and declares that he had defended the truth with candour and sincerity. Every one knows that he maintained the apostolic institution of presbytery, and, of course, that after the death of Christ, or in the apostolic age, there were *no prelates in the church*. But, if boldness of assertion could avail, Mr. Boyd would soon convince us that the reformer, before his death, had recanted his presbyterianism. He quotes a few lines from the Institutes, which, *in their insulated state*, are of equivocal meaning, but *he strangely suppresses the very next sentence, which completely upsets his argument, and vindicates the consistency of Calvin*. For the passage itself, and for a more full exposure of the manner in which the great reformer has been tortured into a witness for prelacy, the reader is referred to the next discourse. It would be easy to show that many others of Mr. Boyd's witnesses marshalled in his notes, would also, upon cross-examination, overwhelm him with confusion.

END OF NOTES TO DISCOURSE I.

DISCOURSE II.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM M'CLURE,
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The Pastors of the Christian Church, of one Order, and of equal Authority—The Decision of our Lord on the Subject—The names Presbyter and Bishop applied to the same persons in Scripture—Plurality of Rulers in the Churches of Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica—Testimonies of Episcopalian Writers—Objections Answered.

“Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you.”
—Mark, x, 42, 43.

THE Gospel was not, like the former dispensation, intended to be local and temporary. It was to last till time shall be no more. The glad tidings of great joy were to be proclaimed throughout the world. Accordingly, our Lord made provision for the extension and permanence of his church. He appointed officers to preach the word, to collect believers into worshipping communities, and make regulations for their future management and guidance.

Of these officers, some were intended to be temporary and others to be permanent. The Gospel was to be preached amidst much opposition. It was to be established upon the ruins of heathenism. Great difficulties were to be overcome, and it was therefore necessary that the first heralds of the cross should be endued with great and unusual powers.

We find, accordingly, that Christ appointed persons having the power of working miracles to attest their divine mission—persons endowed with supernatural gifts and extraordinary authority, such as apostles, evangelists, and prophets. These were appointed not only to preach the word, but to settle the constitution of the church, and to commit the administration of it to the ordinary and permanent officers. The apostles often took the name, and acted in the character of ordinary ministers, but the apostolic office itself was temporary and extraordinary. The apostles must all have seen the Lord after his resurrection, in order that they might bear witness to this fact, which lies at the foundation of the whole Christian system. When the people were called upon to elect a successor to Judas, this qualification was expressly stated. “Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” (Acts, i, 21, 22.) It was necessary that the apostles should not only have the power of speaking in the languages of the people to whom they were sent, and of working miracles in confirmation of their divine commission, but that they should also have the power of communicating miraculous gifts to others. And, further, they possessed an authority not limited in its exercise to any particular parish or diocese, but were commanded “to go into all the world,” “to all nations,” and to “the uttermost parts of the earth.” To them was committed the care of all the churches. It is evident

that the apostolic office was extraordinary, and ceased with the lives of those who first held it. And when, therefore, any, at this present day, come to us assuming the authority and demanding the respect due to the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, they must pardon us if we say to them,—“ We cannot take your word for this; but show that you have the powers and qualifications of apostles, preach the same doctrines, and exhibit the same signs which they did among the people, and then, *but not till then*, will we acknowledge you to be their successors.”¹

We read also, in the early primitive church, of prophets and evangelists. It belonged to the former, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, to expound the Scriptures, and to foretel the events of futurity. The latter, again, were the companions of the apostles, they were commissioned to travel among the infant churches, to ordain ministers and settle congregations according to all the parts of church order. The ordinary ministers of that time required their aid. The New Testament Scriptures had not then been committed to writing, and the evangelists in some degree supplied this deficiency. Their office, it is owned by all, was not fixed to any particular settled place, demanding a special attendance, which is expressly required of every ordinary church officer. The canon of Scripture is complete, nothing more is wanted of doctrine or of precept to establish and to guide the church, extraordinary ambassadors are therefore no longer required.

But while these passed away, the ordinary and permanent officers have continued. These are pres-

¹ See Note A.

byters and deacons, and of the presbyters there are two kinds, teaching and ruling elders. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim., v, 17.) To the former, those who labour in word and doctrine, we are at present to confine our attention.

That you may the better understand the subject, let me briefly state the difference of opinion which exists regarding these officers. According to the system of prelacy, as exemplified in the Church of England, there is a distinction of ranks among the ministers of religion, and one of its fundamental articles is that a bishop is superior to a presbyter. In opposition to this, Presbyterians hold that the pastors of the Christian church are of one order and of equal authority, whatever differences may be among them in age and talents and learning.

The principle which I undertake to establish is this. That the pastors of the flock, who are to give themselves to the ministry of the word, and to conduct the ordinances of religion, are of *one* order, have no earthly superiors, and are *equal* in rank and power.

For proof of this statement, we appeal to the Scriptures alone. Whatever they have required or directed, is required and directed by God, and is invested with his authority. Man has no authority over the conscience, and can never bind his fellow-man in any religious concern whatever. If then, we find, at the present day, or in past ages, any thing said upon this subject, whether by divines or others, however learned or esteemed they may have been, and which, at the same time, is not said in the Scriptures,

or clearly warranted by the practice of our Lord and his apostles, it is in no way binding upon us. It may be said wisely, or it may not—the opinion may be good, or it may be bad, but it cannot in any degree have the nature of a law, and we are quite justified in rejecting it as the invention of fallible, uninspired men. All that they have written is a fallible testimony. To the Scriptures alone, we can appeal without danger of being led astray.

In establishing the doctrine of ministerial parity, we refer, in the first place, to the highest possible authority, even to that of our Lord Jesus Christ. His decision is recorded in the words of our text. The disciples had vainly imagined that he was about to establish a kingdom in which some of its officers would exercise authority over the rest, and in prospect of this, their struggles for lordship and dominion already had commenced. But he warns them of their error. The words of our text plainly show that *He* never intended to establish a superior order among his ministers, but, on the other hand, that they should all stand upon an equal footing. He checks the proud contention of his disciples for superiority in these words: “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them.” (Mark, iv, 42.) But what is the mandate of the great King and Head of the church, the supreme fountain of all authority? “IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU.” (Verse 43.) As if he had said, “There may be princes and potentates of the world, and there may be, for managing the temporal affairs

of nations, officers of various orders, and different ranks, but among you, the rulers of my spiritual kingdom, *it shall not be so*, you are all of one order, and of equal power.”

Again let it be observed that, throughout the word of God, no distinction whatever is recognised among the ministers of the Gospel, but they are uniformly represented as being of the same rank. The pastors of Christian congregations are indeed called by different names in the sacred volume. Thus, the term presbyter is applied to them to express the honourable station which they hold. This term signifies, literally, an aged person or elder. It was employed among the Jews as a title of office, to indicate the dignity of persons holding such situations of high trust as required not only faithfulness, but wisdom, prudence, and experience. The term presbyter, as thus used by the Jews, was adopted by the apostles, and with great propriety applied to the pastors of the different congregations which they collected, in order to mark, not only the dignity of the ministerial office, but the piety and wisdom with which it should be especially adorned.

As the term presbyter has been applied to Christian ministers in the sacred writings to indicate the dignity of their station, so the term *overseer* has been applied to them in the same writings to intimate the duties of their office. This term is the exact translation of the Greek word, from which is derived the English word *bishop*. The word overseer and the word bishop, in the original, are the same. Now, if it can be demonstrated that the names presbyter and bishop are used interchangeably, that those in

one place called presbyters or elders, are, in another, called bishops, and that those denominated bishops are again denominated presbyters or elders, you will surely admit that they mean the very same office, and are only different names, that may be applied to any minister of a Christian congregation. For this purpose let me refer you, in the first place, to Acts, xx, 17, 28. 17. "And from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* of the church." 28. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

The apostle being on his way to Jerusalem, was desirous of an interview with the ministers of the Ephesian church, and therefore we are told, "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church." Observe the persons he sent for were the *elders* or *presbyters* of the church, and these are the persons who came, for it is added "when they," that is, *the presbyters*, were come to him, he said unto them, "Ye know after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." And he goes on in a very affectionate manner, and addressing himself to the very same persons, a little before called *elders* or *presbyters*, he exhorts them to take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them *overseers*." (*Bishops*.) Now it is most evident that the very same persons who are presbyters or elders in the 17th verse, are bishops in the 28th, thus proving that a Scripture bishop and a presbyter or elder are the same.

Again, I adduce Philippians, i, 1: "Paul and

Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons." Here it is to be observed, that all the officers in the church at Philippi are enumerated. Yet the term elder or presbyter is omitted. And why? Because it would have been superfluous, being the same in signification as the term bishop. Had the officers been different, we cannot think that presbyters would have been overlooked when deacons were mentioned. Had it been addressed to bishops, elders, and deacons, it would be thought, by an advocate for episcopacy, absolutely decisive in favour of these orders of ecclesiastical officers. As it now stands, and as it is uncontradicted by any other passage of Scripture, it is equally decisive that there were but two, namely, bishops and deacons.¹

A similar instance occurs in the epistle of Paul to Titus, i, 5—7: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders," or presbyters, "in every city." He then proceeds to describe the qualifications of those whom Titus should ordain elders or presbyters. "*A bishop*," says he, "must be blameless." Here it is evident that by bishop he means the same person and the same officer as by elder or presbyter just before.

The fact that I have stated is further demonstrated by a most clear and decisive passage in 1 Pet. v, 1, 2: "The elders," or presbyters, "who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," or as it should be rendered, "co-presbyter."² And then he pro-

¹ See Note B.

² Συμπρεσβυτερος.

ceeds in the next verse: “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.” Here, as I said before, the original word may be rendered *discharging the office of a bishop*.¹ As the apostle expressly calls those to whom he directs his exhortations, presbyters, it unavoidably follows, that the discharging the office of a Scripture-bishop belongs to presbyters or to the ministers of the Gospel in common, and consequently that both these terms, denote one and the same officer. And what the apostle adds in the third and fourth verses, is worthy of remark, just as if his prophetic eye had foreseen the evils that would arise from the introduction of a system so adapted to the views of worldly ambition and earthly pride: “Neither as being *lords over God’s heritage*, but being ensamples to the flock; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”²

The next argument I adduce in support of my position is, that we find several churches mentioned in the New Testament, in each of which there was a plurality of bishops or presbyters, equal in rank and authority. This was the case in Antioch. The power of ordination in this church, and consequently that of government, was in the hands of a plurality of prophets or teachers; for it is said, (Acts, xiii, 1—3,) “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen which had been brought up with Herod

¹ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥΝΤΕΣ.

² See Note C.

the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." This was the ordination of Barnabas and Saul, and was it not, I ask, decidedly presbyterian? The divine command, made known by the Holy Ghost, was addressed, *not to one individual*, exalted above the rest, but to all in common—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul;" and in obedience to this command, all of them concurred in this solemn act—and "*they* laid their hands on them and sent them away." From this, it is beyond all doubt there was a multiplicity of rulers in the church of Antioch, all uniting in the act of ordination. Examine this passage for yourselves, and try if you can discover the slightest hint of this church having been under the sole government of a single person or bishop. Most assuredly you cannot; for it was a presbyterian church. The same was the case in the church of Ephesus. You will remember from the passage in the twentieth chapter in the Acts, which I have already quoted, that when Paul was on his way to Rome there were at Ephesus, not a number of priests and one bishop, not a number of pastors and one ruler, but several church officers, each of whom was a presbyter to rule, and a bishop to inspect. The duties to which the presbyters or bishops of Ephesus were exhorted, clearly show that they were clothed with the power of jurisdiction, no less than with that of dispensing the word and sacraments. They were to "take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them

bishops, to feed the church of God.”¹ But to be bishops, and to feed the church of God, express in the strongest terms that they were to govern and to rule it. This authority they exercised in common, and without subjection to any ecclesiastical superior. The church at Philippi is no less a witness in favour of presbytery and against the modern system of diocesan episcopacy, than the churches already noticed. It is expressly asserted by the apostle Paul, in a passage to which I have already referred, (Phil. i, 1,) that there were *several* bishops at Philippi in his days, and he never intimates that one possessed any authority over the rest. A similar arrangement appears to have existed in the church of Thessalonica. It was under the government of a number of presbyters; and its members are required to “know them which laboured among them and *were over them* in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” (1 Thess. v, 12, 13.) Can there be any thing more plain than that the government of this church was not in the hands of a single prelate, but of a number of ministers who had equal authority and power, and who were entitled to equal submission and respect from all its members?

Thus it is plain that in the churches of Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica, the pastors of the flock were of one order and of equal authority; and we have every reason to believe that other churches were similarly constituted.²

In maintaining the position which I have taken, I

¹ The Greek word *ποιμαίνειν* here translated “*feed*,” is rendered “*rule*” in Matt. ii, 6; Rev. ii, 27; xii, 8; xix, 15.

² See Note D.

appeal, in the next place, to some of the highest authorities among Episcopalians themselves. The principal reformers of the Church of England held the same views that we now advocate. On this point, the accurate historian, M'Crie, has observed : " We would mistake exceedingly if we supposed that they were men of the same principles and temper with many who succeeded to their places, or that they were satisfied with the pitch to which they had carried the reformation in the English church, and regarded it as a paragon and perfect pattern to all other churches. They were strangers to those extravagant and illiberal notions which were afterwards adopted by the fond admirers of the hierarchy and liturgy. They would have laughed at the man who would have seriously asserted that the ceremonies constituted any part of "the beauty of holiness," or that the imposition of the hands of a bishop was essential to the validity of ordination; they would not have owned that person as a Protestant who would have ventured to insinuate, that where this was wanting, there was no Christian ministry, no ordinances, no church, and perhaps no salvation !

Many things which their successors have applauded they barely tolerated ; and they would have been happy, if the circumstances of their time would have permitted them, to introduce alterations which have since been cried down as puritanical innovations. Strange as it may appear to some, I am not afraid of exceeding the truth when I say, that if the English reformers, including the Protestant bishops, had been left to their own choice, if they had not been held back by a large mass of popishly-affected

clergy in the reign of Edward, nor restrained by the supreme civil authority on the accession of Elizabeth, they would have brought the government and worship of the Church of England nearly to the pattern of other reformed churches.”¹ Many testimonies to this effect might be adduced from the early divines of the English church, from men distinguished by their piety and learning. Many of them assert, “That there were but two offices of Divine institution in the church, viz., elders or bishops to feed the flock, and deacons to minister the charity of the church to the poor and needy.” A book, entitled “The Erudition of a Christian Man,” was composed by the ecclesiastical committees appointed by the king, and published by his authority in the year 1540. In this public and important document it is declared that “the Scripture makes express mention of those two orders only, *priests* and *deacons*.” And, it is added, “Whereas we have thus summarily declared, what is the office and ministration which in holy Scripture is committed to bishops and priests, and in what things it consists, as is before rehearsed, we think it expedient and necessary that all men should be advertised and taught, that all such lawful authority and power of one bishop over another, were and be given them by consent, ordinance, and positive commands of *men only*, and *not by any ordinance of God* in holy Scripture.”

The pious and excellent commentator, Scott, when speaking of the apostolic age, gives his opinion in these words, “It must be allowed that there were not distinct orders of ministers in the church at that time. They were at first called either elders or

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. i, page 106.

overseers, that is presbyters or bishops indifferently, and *no one had any direct authority over the rest.*¹

We thus find that our Saviour issued an express command forbidding his ministers to have any pre-eminence over their brethren. We have undoubted testimony that presbyter and bishop are names for the same persons or officers, and we have seen that in the Scriptures there is not the slightest intimation of a difference between them. It appears also from the writings of the apostles, that in the first and purest age of the Gospel, instead of one bishop being over many churches in an extensive diocese, and of an order superior to other ministers, there were *many* bishops even in one town, upon the most perfect equality with each other. And there is added to all this the recorded sentiments of the best and most learned divines of the English church, that, though sanctioned by human authority, the system of prelacy has no foundation in the word of God. It being evident that bishops and presbyters were the same in the apostolic age, it follows that all ministers of the Gospel, regularly called and ordained to the sacred office, are *bishops* within the limits of their respective charges, according to the true and genuine spirit of the Gospel.

When Christianity first appeared in its native beauty and simplicity, theré was no assumption of authority by one minister over another. Even the apostles themselves, the chosen friends of our Lord, who had heard from his sacred lips the words of eternal life, upon whom the Holy Spirit had descended, and who were enabled to control and suspend the

¹ See Note E.

laws of nature, even *they* claimed no pre-eminence. They were actively engaged in feeding the flock of Christ, and in performing the most laborious duties of the ministerial office. And they addressed the pastors and ministers of the word as their "brethren," over whom they asserted no authority of rank or station. The Christians in the primitive churches called no man "father," in a spiritual sense, for one was their Father who is in heaven. They called no man "master," in a spiritual sense, for *one* was their Master, even Christ the Lord, and all they were brethren.

From this mass of evidence, the truth of the proposition with which I set out must, I think, be established in every unprejudiced mind; namely, that the pastors of the flock, who are to give themselves to the ministry of the word, and to conduct the ordinances of religion, are of *one* order, have no earthly superiors, and are *equal* in rank and power.

To this view of the subject, which I hold to be alone the scriptural view, objections have been made which it is now my duty to examine.

An advocate for episcopacy commences by telling us, that "the system of equality is not the system of God, and that subordination and distinction seem to pervade all the works of the Lord of wisdom."¹ This fact is adduced as favourable to the system of Prelacy; and in order, it is supposed, to have some counterpart to such officers as archbishops and archdeacons in the *church*, a new order of beings is said to exist in *heaven*. We are told that "in the circle of its glorious inhabitants are found not only the angels

¹ Sermons on the Church, page 37.

who minister to their Maker's will, but also the *archangels* who surround his throne." We read indeed of *the* Archangel, who is generally believed to be the Angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, but no where in the word of God do we read of an order of beings denominated archangels. The text adduced, (Isaiah, vi, 2,) gives no evidence of its existence.

But waiving this, the argument from the gradations that exist in the material and spiritual creation, does not in the slightest degree affect the point at issue. Presbyterians hold that the pastors of the flock are of one order, and of equal authority; but they never denied that there should be subordination among the officers as well as the judicatories of the church. We acknowledge Christ as the only King and Head of the Church; presbyters are under him; deacons are under both. This is a fair subordination of officers. But, it will be said, You have not enough. Well then, if we are to have gradations in the church to correspond with the gradations in the material and animate creation, where are we to stop? We must then have an infinite variety of officers; for, tell me if you can, the gradations to be found from the humble blade of grass to the glorious luminary of day—from the worm that creeps upon the earth to the angel that burns before the throne of Jehovah.

An argument is brought for episcopacy from there having been a high priest, priests, and Levites in the temple at Jerusalem. Let it be remembered, however, that there was only *one* high priest under the Mosaic dispensation—*one* high priest for the whole

commonwealth of Israel—and how can this single individual be considered a type for hundreds of bishops? Let Episcopalians beware how they urge this argument. As they employ it, it proves too much *for them*. It makes more for the authority of the Roman pontiff than for their hierarchy.

The Jewish high priest was indeed a typical character. And of what was he the type? Not certainly of a great army of bishops! but of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident that the high priest was to have no earthly representative under the Christian dispensation. In the New Testament, the Saviour is expressly called “*The High Priest of our profession.*” (Heb. iii, 1.) We have still *one* High Priest, even Jesus Christ, who is entered into the Holy of holies, the heavenly sanctuary, and we have two orders of officers on earth under him, presbyters and deacons. The argument, therefore, instead of being against us, is in our favour.

In the “*Sermons on the Church,*” this argument is brought forward in a prominent manner, and in the Appendix, (page 186,) Clemens Romanus is quoted as a confirmatory witness: “To the high priest proper offices are committed; to the priests their peculiar office is assigned, the Levites¹ have their own ministries; and a layman is bound to laic performances. Let every one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his proper station, living conscientiously, and not transgressing the prescribed rule of his service or ministry.” “This passage,” it is

¹ The writer here introduces the word “deacons” without any authority from the original. Where did he learn that there were deacons in the Jewish church?

said, "not only conveys the idea that the Jewish priesthood was the framework of the Christian, but shows, that before the death of the apostles, the three orders were recognised and established in the church."

To this I reply, that this passage by no means proves that there were three distinct orders in the Christian church. The venerable father intreats the believers at Corinth to be subject to their spiritual guides, as the Jews had been to theirs. While he does this, there is no evidence, but quite the contrary, that he ever thought of drawing a parallel between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry. It may just as well be asserted, that the officers in the Christian church corresponded with those in the Roman army, because the same Clemens has said, "Let us observe with what order and promptitude and submission soldiers execute the orders of their commanders. All are not generals, or chiliarchs, or centurions, or commanders of fifty, or subordinate officers, but each in his own rank executes the orders of the king and his commanding officers." The matter stands thus: Clemens in one passage mentions incidentally the high priest, priests, and Levites, therefore it is concluded, there are *three* orders of ministers in the Christian church. The same Clemens enumerates *five* sets of officers in the Roman army; therefore there ought to be *five* orders of ministers in the Christian church. The reasoning in both cases would be equally conclusive. The quotation from Clemens, so confidently adduced, has no bearing upon the point at issue.

The temple and temple services were local and typical. When Christ died upon the cross, they all

were abolished. The constitution of the synagogue, being more simple and better suited to a religion that was to be universal, is the model, we conceive, upon which the church is constituted. In the apostolic age, the name "synagogue" was applied to a Christian church; and from it the very names of its officers are taken. The term used to designate a priest under the law is never applied in the New Testament to a Christian minister.¹

In opposition to our views of equality, we are told of the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. These it is said were two distinct classes of officers; and, in order to make up the required number of *three*, our Lord himself is represented as the bishop, and as a distinct order of ministry in his own church. Let any individual examine the commissions given to the twelve in the tenth chapter of Matthew, and to the seventy in the tenth chapter of Luke, and he will find that they were quite similar. Both were clothed with the authority of their Master, both were endowed with miraculous powers, as credentials of their mission; both were appointed to preach "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The fact is, the church was not organized at all during the time our Lord was upon the earth. The ministry of John the Baptist, his own ministry, and that of the apostles and seventy, were intended only to prepare the way for its establishment. This could not be effected so long as the Jewish polity continued, and *it* could not cease until our Lord had "finished transgression, and made an end of sin" by the sacrifice of himself. The reasoning from this is

¹ See Note F.

just: "If the Christian church had no being before Christ's death, then certainly there was no government; and consequently the argument is lost to all intents and purposes. It is clear as light, that the followers of Christ, in the days of his flesh, were under no distinct government but that of the Jewish church, with which they were still incorporated."¹

The principal stress of the episcopal argument here is made to rest upon the assumption that "the vacancy in the circle of the apostles occasioned by the suicide of Judas was filled up from this body." (The seventy.) But where is the evidence for this? None is offered. The argument is based upon an assertion that cannot be proved. No where do the Scriptures say that the apostles ever exercised any authority over the seventy, or that Matthias had been one of that number. A statement like this, without any evidence to support it, is useless to any cause.

The next allegation to be noticed is that James was bishop of Jerusalem. If bishop be used in the Scripture sense, it may be fairly said that James was a bishop at Jerusalem, but if in the *modern* sense, then I controvert the statement. We are told that "the writers of the early ages, with one voice, style him Bishop of Jerusalem." It is rather remarkable that a leading authority adduced is Augustine, who lived towards the close of the fourth century. This is just as if I were to bring forward a minister now living to certify, in a disputed case, as to who had been pastor of a church in a German city in the fifteenth century. The advocate of prelacy acknowledges that "Scripture makes no precise statement,

¹ Dick's Theology, vol. iv, page 333.

contains no definite record upon this fact," but he thinks it enough to show that James was frequently found at Jerusalem. Although this be admitted, it proves nothing to his purpose. A minister may be often in a particular town or district, yet that will not establish his right to the exercise of supreme ecclesiastical authority. But the council of Jerusalem is pointed to as conclusive in this matter. You will find an account of its proceedings in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. It appears that the apostles and elders were met together upon this occasion, and such of the brethren as thought fit addressed the assembly. In the course of the proceedings, which, you will observe, were strictly presbyterial, James also gave his opinion, and used the expression, as it is rendered in our version, "my sentence is." This, however, he does not do, as it is asserted, "in the tone of official authority." The original word means nothing more than the result of reflection, or the expression of opinion, and might have been used with equal propriety by any member of the court.¹ Many of the most learned episcopalian authors themselves admit that it by no means conveys the idea of an authoritative decree. Is any disposed to question this assertion, and to say that James alone decided the matter in debate—look then to the fourth verse of the following chapter, and there we are expressly told that "the decrees were ordained," not by James, but "by the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." This was afterwards asserted (chapter xxi, 25,) in the presence of James himself, without any expression of anger upon his part, that his sup-

¹ See Note

posed episcopal authority had been invaded. And further, the decree was received and obeyed throughout all the Asiatic churches. If it had been made by James alone, his authority must have extended much more widely than is generally represented. He must have exercised control over all the apostles and elders who were present; together with the distant churches from which they came. This would quite confound the episcopal arrangements which have been made regarding other apostles who are said also to have had appointments "limited and restricted to a particular territory." There is not the slightest evidence from Scripture that any of the apostles were restricted in the discharge of their duties by local boundaries, or that James was, in the *modern* sense of the word, bishop of Jerusalem.

Our attention is next called to the Epistles of Timothy and Titus, "documents which," we are told, "must be erased from the Bible before the doctrine of ministerial equality be considered a truth of inspiration."

Here let me inform you that the postscripts of these epistles form no part of the original. They were excluded from the earliest English translations, but when our present version was made, in the reign of James the First, they were placed, very improperly, where they now stand, but they are of no authority whatever.¹

With regard to the offices held by Timothy and Titus, there is a considerable difference among Episcopalians themselves, some make them diocesan bishops, while others insist they must have been archbishops.

¹ See Note H.

Extracts from the Epistles addressed to Timothy and Titus are adduced to prove their prelatical authority, but the directions contained in them are just such as may be addressed to any presbyterian minister. Because Timothy was to give advice, and administer rebukes in certain cases, does it therefore follow that he *alone* was authorised to exhort and rebuke? He was warned to “lay hands suddenly on no man.” Does it therefore follow that a diocese was marked out for him, and that in a certain prescribed territory no other persons had a right to ordain? We are told that Titus ordained elders at Crete, and that Timothy gave a charge to the Ephesian elders, therefore, it is argued Titus was diocesan bishop of Crete, and Timothy, diocesan bishop of Ephesus. Let us apply this reasoning to other parallel cases. Titus ordained elders in every city, therefore Titus was bishop of Crete. But Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, therefore Paul and Barnabas were joint bishops of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Timothy gave a charge to the Ephesian elders, therefore he was bishop of Ephesus. But Paul gave a charge to the Ephesian elders, therefore Paul was bishop of Ephesus. Thus, it is plain, that the very same reasoning that proves Titus to have been bishop of Crete, and Timothy bishop of Ephesus, will prove all the apostles to have been bishops of all the places where they exercised any of those offices which the Episcopal church has confined to her prelates.

If, after all, Titus and Timothy were diocesan bishops of Crete and Ephesus, they shamefully neglected their duty. We hear of them travel-

ling about in all directions. We find Timothy at Lystra, Berea, Athens, Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, and then proposing to go to Judea. So we discover Titus in Jerusalem, Corinth, Macedonia, and when sent to Crete he was to remain there only until relieved by Artemus or Tychicus, and then Paul expected to meet him at Nicopolis. (Tit. iii, 12.) If it be said that they were bishops of every place to which they went in the service of the church, they must have been bishops of a great part of Asia and Europe, which would prove that they were popes rather than diocesan bishops. Let me quote upon this point the opinion of Dr. Whitby,—an eminent episcopalian writer: “If, by saying Timothy and Titus were bishops, the one of Ephesus and the other of Crete, we understand that they took upon them those churches or dioceses, as their fixed and peculiar charge, in which they were to preside for the term of life, I believe that Timothy and Titus were not thus bishops; for both Timothy and Titus were evangelists. Now the work of an evangelist, saith Eusebius, was this, to lay the foundations of the faith in barbarous nations, to constitute them pastors, and, having committed to them the cultivating of those new plantations, they passed on to other countries and nations.”¹ Thus does this commentator judiciously account for the frequent travels of these servants of God. Thus does he rescue their characters from those who, professing to *elevate*, really *degrade* them.

We are next referred to what is ushered in with the pompous title, “a striking body of evidence which meets us in the Book of Revelation.” If

¹ Whitby's Commentary, vol. ii, page 430.

indeed there be here a striking body of evidence, it is rather unfortunate for the cause of episcopacy that the name bishop is never once mentioned from the beginning to the end of the book. The only passage dwelt upon is the epistle addressed to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, and the argument for episcopacy rests upon *one* word in that epistle. It is asserted that by the angel was intended a single individual, and then it is concluded that he was a diocesan bishop. This is an *assertion* without one particle of proof. Supposing the angel to have been a single individual, Presbyterians have just as good a right to assume that he was the moderator or clerk of the presbytery, to whom official documents always are addressed. The mere fact of a letter having been written to a person to be communicated to all the members of an association to which he belongs, will not surely invest him with supreme authority over all its members. But there is strong presumption that by the angel was *not* intended a single individual. Any unprejudiced reader will observe, on examining the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, that the angel of a particular church is addressed in the singular or plural number indifferently. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ addresses the angel of the church of Smyrna: "Fear none of those things which *thou* shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast *some of you* into prison that *ye* may be tried, and *ye* shall have tribulation ten days; be *thou* faithful unto death and I will give *thee* a crown of life." (Rev. ii, 10.) Another passage from the Book of Revelation utterly overturns this assumption in favour of episcopacy: "I saw," says the beloved disciple, "another angel

fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." (Rev. xiv, 6.) By applying to this text the reasoning employed to render the former available to the use of prelacy, the Gospel is to be preached "to every nation and kindred and tongue and people," by "a single individual," and he must be a person of "episcopal dignity." This interpretation cannot stand.

Let us try if we cannot give a more consistent view of both these passages. The Gospel is to be preached by men; and the angel in the latter passage is the emblem of a human ministry. And so it is in the place that has been quoted. The epistle was addressed to the *ministry* of the Ephesian church; or, as we would say now, to the *Presbytery of Ephesus*.

Driven from Scripture, the advocates of episcopacy fly to the Fathers for assistance.¹ Here we do not propose to follow them. Antiquity is not a sufficient foundation for our faith. If doctrines are to be regarded as necessarily true because they are ancient, then must these very heresies which the apostles combated be implicitly received because they were found in the earliest periods of the church. Testimonies from the Fathers are very little to be regarded. Many sayings attributed to them, as you have lately heard in the case of Ignatius, were, in all probability, never uttered by them. During the dark ages, their writings were changed from the simplicity of primitive times to suit the domineering views of the papacy, which claimed the world for its dominion and all man-

¹ See Note I.

kind for its slaves. At all events they are useless as a test of discipline or doctrine. Let it not, however, be supposed, that the testimony of the Fathers is unfavourable to the presbyterian view. No: Their earliest and most authentic records bear evidence to the fact, that Presbytery was the general system of the church, in the age immediately succeeding the age of the apostles.¹

Not content with the Fathers, the name of Calvin has been used in support of prelatical authority. A quotation has been made from his works that is apparently decisive in favour of episcopacy. In the Appendix to the "Sermons on the Church," we have the following extract from Calvin's Institutes: "They named all on whom was enjoined the office of teaching, presbyters. They chose one of their number in every city to whom, in particular, they gave the name of bishop, lest from equality, as usually happens, dissensions should arise." Here it was quite prudent for the advocate of prelacy to stop; but there is no reason why *we* should withhold the remainder of the passage. The whole runs thus: "Hitherto we have treated of the mode of government in the church as it has been delivered to us by the sure word of God and of the offices in it as they were instituted by Christ. All those to whom the office of teaching was assigned were denominated presbyters. To guard against dissension, the general consequence of equality, the presbyters in each city chose one of their own number, whom they distinguished by the title of bishop. The bishop, however, was not so superior to the rest in honour and

¹ See Note J.

dignity as to have any dominion over his colleagues, but the functions performed by a consul in the senate—such as to collect the votes, to preside over the rest in the exercise of advice, admonition, and exhortation, to regulate all the proceedings by his authority, and to carry into execution whatever had been decreed by the general voice—were the functions exercised by the bishop in the assembly of the presbyters. And that this arrangement was introduced by human agreement on account of the necessity of the times, is acknowledged by the ancient writers themselves.”¹ You see then with what justice Calvin has been pressed into the service of episcopacy. The bishop of whom he spoke was nothing more than Moderator of the Court.

I have often heard another argument for prelacy drawn from the supposed expediency of the system. We are told that it is necessary to have exalted stations in the church, to serve as objects of ambition to the inferior clergy, and to afford ease and leisure for those who can defend by the press the doctrines of the Gospel. Were these high offices never bestowed except on account of piety and learning there might be some reason for this arrangement. But need I tell you that this is not the case? Do we find Stackhouse, Simeon, John Newton, Thomas Scott, or Legh Richmond among the dignitaries of prelacy? No: They were left in comparative obscurity.

We hear the Church of England frequently and highly lauded for the works which she has contributed to our theological literature. We do not wish to deny that she has done good service to the cause

¹ Calvin's Institutes, Book iv, chap. iv, sect. 1, 2.

of our common Christianity, and for that service we are grateful. But it must at the same time be observed that her claims in this respect have been vastly overrated. Much of her theology is exceedingly unsound. For instance, Dr. Samuel Clarke, rector of St. James's, Westminster, by his writings in support of Arianism inoculated the Protestants of Britain with that dangerous heresy. Warburton and Berkeley have been placed in the forefront of episcopal theology.¹ Well had it been for the Christian world if the writings of the former never had been penned; for his productions are distinguished alike by the unsoundness of their principles and the bitterness of their spirit. And what contribution has Berkeley made to immortalise his name? I know indeed of treatises comparatively insignificant; but who has heard of any important work that he has contributed to the *theology* of Britain? The writings of Magee, Paley, and others, of the English church, are pervaded with the leaven of Arminianism. If we want sound and substantial theology we go rather to presbyterian and puritan writers: to such men as Halyburton, Wither- spoon, Willison, Durham, Dickson, Doddridge, Howe, Owen, and many others. And what living author has contributed so much to the stock of theological literature as the eloquent and illustrious Chalmers?

We see, my friends, what has been said in favour of prelacy. We have brought it to the law and to the testimony, and found it wanting. There is abundance of assertion, but great scarcity of evidence. A gorgeous fabric has been raised; but it is a building of "hay and wood and stubble." Our

¹ Sermons on the Church, page 147.

pure and scriptural church, founded on the Rock of Ages, yet stands secure. Her ramparts are unscathed amidst the heaviest artillery of lordly prelacy. Still do I assert the principle with which I set out; a principle which has been strengthened by the attempts made to overthrow it; still do I assert that the pastors of the flock, who are to give themselves to the ministry of the word, and to conduct the ordinances of religion, are of *one* order, have no earthly superiors, and are *equal* in rank and power.

When you perceive the slight foundation upon which prelacy is built, you will be surprised to hear of the exclusive spirit, and the uncharitable language of its votaries. It has often been asserted that Presbyterians have no church: that all without the pale of the episcopal communion are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God.

How dreadful this sentence of excommunication! How awful thus to pronounce the everlasting destiny of millions! How awful to declare that the ministers of all those churches that have flourished in Geneva, France, Holland, America, England, Scotland, and in our own island, have had no commission to preach the word of God—that they have had no right to administer the sacraments of religion, and yet that these are necessary to salvation—that those heralds of the Gospel who, though they bowed not to the mitre, have carried the lamp of truth into the dark regions of idolatry, and left it burning there with a pure and steady flame—that all those faithful ministers and private Christians who have adorned the doctrine of

¹ See Note K.

God their Saviour, hundreds, thousands of whom have passed into the dark valley of the shadow of death fearing no evil, who in the last and trying hour have been cheered by the consolations of the Gospel and animated by the bright prospect of coming glory, whose dying lips have breathed the language of assured hope, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth ” —that all these were without the pale of the church, were destitute of covenanted grace and have gone to a hopeless and undone eternity—and this merely because they have not acknowledged the authority of Prelacy! Who does not shudder at the thought? Oh! ’tis enough to freeze the blood at its very fountain and strike horror to the heart.

It is right, however, distinctly to state, that I do not find these uncharitable sentiments in the Sermons to which I have referred, except in so far as they are implied in the exclusive application of the title, “ *The Church,*” to that comparatively small section of Christians to which the writer belongs.¹

Presbyterians should learn, from a review of this subject, more ardent attachment to their principles. We have seen that our church rests upon the word of God, and we have no reason to be ashamed of it. It is too much the fashion of the present time to look upon religious principles as matters of indifference. But did our venerated fathers treat them thus? Oh! no. They watched the first inroads of superstition, and, though the arm of power was lifted up against them, they boldly stemmed the torrent, nor would they ever permit the foul inventions of man to stain the purity of the faith once

¹ See Note L.

delivered to the saints. Deeply affecting is the account of their sufferings. They have been driven from their families and their homes, because they would not bend their necks to human authority. They have worshipped the God of their fathers with no other covering than the canopy of heaven. The barren rocks and desert glens have echoed with the voice of praise. Their prayers have ascended, from the temple of nature, that their children might live in peace and enjoy the blessings of religious liberty. "They were troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed." Let imagination place us for a moment in one of their worshipping assemblies, and our hearts must be cold indeed if we do not feel for their sufferings and venerate their memories. It is the holy day which God himself hath blessed. They seek the seclusion of the mountain vale, that, beyond the reach of earthly tyrants, they may pour out their prayers to the God of heaven. We see hastening to the appointed spot, the young in the buoyancy of health and vigour, the old bending under the infirmities of years, and the fond mother, clasping the tender infant to her bosom, and braving the fury of the winter storm, that she too may join the sacred band. Now the assembled worshippers catch the spirit of the upper sanctuary, and in the notes of their favourite and heart-touching melodies they pour into the listening ear of their Father in heaven, the sorrows that oppress and the hopes that cheer them. The voice of age is raised in prayer, and childhood lisps the praises of its Creator. With holy reverence they read the

book of life, and hear from God's ambassador the message of the Gospel. Obedient to the dying command of the Redeemer, they observe the solemn rite which he appointed the same night on which he was betrayed. Amidst the wildest of nature's scenery, they press to their lips the emblems of their Saviour's love, and from this world of sorrow their thoughts are wafted to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." The shades of the sacred day appear closing in safety—the whole air is filled with devotion, tranquillity, and peace. When suddenly, from the distant hill, their watchmen give the signal of alarm. In this dread moment there is pictured, upon many a countenance, that firmness and resignation which religion only can impart. Amidst the shriek of terror from the young and helpless, the tramp of an approaching multitude is heard—the minions of power are let loose—the weapons of war are turned on the defenceless worshippers, and the ground that but a moment before was hallowed by their prayers, is now—crimsoned with their blood. Oh! how is it when we think of their devotion and their sufferings, that we can be careless of the blessings which they so dearly purchased!

Some may think it unnecessary and wrong that the presbyterian ministers of this city should bring before their people the distinguishing principles of their church. But let it be remembered that these principles we hold sacred, because they are the principles of the Bible,—that they have been from time to time assailed,—that attempted refutations of them have been circulated among our people,—that, when set apart to the work of the ministry, we solemnly promised in the

presence of God to “defend them to the best of our abilities.” Let these things be remembered, and I am convinced that no right-minded Episcopalian will blame us for keeping at our posts and contending for the faith. Let it be remembered too, that pernicious doctrines have spread extensively in the Church of England, and that the great principles of the Reformation are now openly called in question by professing Protestants.¹ But still it may be said, far better to have nothing but unity and peace. To secure these every sacrifice should be made. Had the persons who hold these views lived in the time of Scotland’s trials, how they would have complained of the intrepid Knox, the learned Melville, and the godly Rutherford, for the discussions which they excited! Had they been contemporaries of Luther, and beheld his struggles for the removal of error, how they would have scowled upon him! Had they lived, when our Lord travelled on the earth, a houseless wanderer, they would have had no sympathy in his doings, they would have been quite dissatisfied with the controversies which he excited. His plain truths about the dignitaries of his day would quite have shocked their sensibilities. Had *they* been consulted, the money changers would never have been driven out of the temple, his faithful warnings never have been uttered. Unity and peace are indeed desirable, but only when they can be had without the sacrifice of principle. “The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, and *then* peaceable.” (James, iii, 17.) We cannot, we dare not compromise the truth. It is the command of Heaven, “Prove all things; hold fast that which

¹ See Note M.

is good." (1 Thess. v, 21.) Sincere inquirers after truth may and should pursue it without aught of bitterness dwelling in their minds. Animosity and discord are not necessarily connected with discussions of this nature. But if they must be, better let them come than allow error to prevail. Let them come—as they may be succeeded by lasting purity, freedom, and peace. "Give me," said the eloquent Thomson, "give me the hurricane rather than the pestilence—give me the hurricane, with its thunder and its lightning and its tempest—give me the hurricane, with its partial and temporary devastations, awful though they be—give me the hurricane with its purifying, healthful, salutary effects—give me that hurricane infinitely rather than the noisome pestilence, whose path is never crossed, whose silence is never disturbed, whose progress is never arrested by one sweeping blast from the heavens, which walks peacefully and silently through the length and breadth of the land, breathing poison into every heart—carrying havoc into every home—euervating all that is strong—defacing all that is beautiful—and casting its blight over the fairest and happiest scenes of human life, and which from day to day and from year to year, with intolerant and interminable malignity, sends its thousands and tens of thousands of hapless victims into the ever-yawning but never-satisfied grave."¹

To conclude, let us reflect with gratitude on the religious blessings and privileges which we enjoy. Our lot has been cast in a land where we are permitted to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, without any to make us afraid. Our

¹ See Note N.

beloved Zion, though long enveloped in the flames of persecution, is unconsumed. She has emerged from the fiery trials of affliction in her native loveliness and purity, and "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," she stands, amidst prevailing error, "the pillar and the ground of truth." But let us bear in mind that it is not alone the purity of our church that can procure us salvation. The greater our privileges, the greater our responsibility. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of them the more will be required." How awful to think that we may belong to a pure and scriptural church, and yet be outcasts from the family of God, that the Gospel may shine in all its brightness and glory around us, when not one ray to cheer or to comfort may have penetrated the heart. How awful to think that the possession of religious privileges may tend only to lull the conscience into a deeper insensibility, and whisper, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." Solemnly, I entreat you to examine your hearts and lives, to enquire how your account for eternity now stands. Have you been humbled under a sense of your sins? Have you fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you in the Gospel? Is Christ all your salvation and all your desire? Are you living a life of prayer, a life of devotedness to the service of God? Are you bringing forth the fruits of holiness in your walk and conversation? Oh! see that you be worthy of the profession that you have made, worthy of those devoted men who preserved by their blood the privileges that you enjoy, worthy of your once crucified, but now exalted Saviour. Live

as becomes candidates for immortality and expectants of eternal glory. Then will our church be adorned with the beauty of holiness—then may we trust that God will hear the prayers that have been offered in her behalf by many a dying martyr on many a bloody scaffold—then will she appear, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

NOTES TO DISCOURSE II.

NOTE, A, p. 81.

IT was necessary to show that the apostolic office was extraordinary, and ceased with the lives of those who held it, as episcopal writers generally maintain the opposite view. For instance, Dr. Hickes, a distinguished scholar of the Church of England, thus speaks: "Bishops are appointed to succeed the apostles, and like them to stand in Christ's place." I hold that there are none at the present day entitled to be called apostles; but if there be, they are not the prelates of England, but the missionaries who preach the Gospel to the heathen, who labour in word and doctrine, and resolve to "spend and be spent" in their Master's service. But where have modern bishops undertaken this labour? "A few persons," says a late writer, "have gone out from the Church of England, as bishops among the heathen, as the bishop of Calcutta. However, they are not strictly apostolical bishops, they generally go where the laborious missionary has *first* laid the *foundation*. There perhaps has not been a *single instance* for the last *thousand* years of a *bishop* deserving the title of *apostolical* bishop by going to preach Christ where he was not named."

When arguing with Presbyterians, the supporters of English prelacy are accustomed, like Dr. Hickes, to insist upon the perpetuity of the apostolic office; but when they would overturn the pretensions of the papal hierarchy they adopt our line of argument, and hold that the apostles were extraordinary officers, who have no successors in the church. The learned Dr. Barrow in his "Treatise against the Papal Supremacy," published by Archbishop Tillotson with a high encomium, felt himself obliged to destroy the foundation of prelacy by showing "That the apostolical office, as such, was personal and temporary,

and therefore, according to its nature and design, not successive or communicable to others in perpetual descendance from them. That it was as such in all respects extraordinary, designed for especial purposes, discharged by special aids, endowed with special privileges, as was needful for the propagation of Christianity and founding of churches."—Barrow's Works, vol. 1, page 77.

NOTE B, p. 86.

The terms, Episcopacy and Episcopalian, are frequently used in this discourse. These are more applicable to the Presbyterian church than to any other, as, in accordance with Scripture, it recognises each minister as bishop or overseer of his own flock, but they are at present employed in the common acceptation to mean the church government by primates, archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deans, prebends, and the various other officers connected with the hierarchy. This system is more properly called prelacy.

NOTE C, p. 87.

The most strenuous defenders of episcopacy are forced to admit the fact that the ordinary ministers of the word were called by the same names in Scripture. The author of the "Sermons on the Church" acknowledges (page 179) that "the terms presbyter and bishop are indiscriminately applied to the same individuals," but he tries to evade the just and natural conclusion deducible from this fact, that these officers were the same. I am at a loss to discover any fallacy in the inference we have drawn. Can it be thought that the sacred writers meant any thing different from what their words express? They use the same terms as applicable to the same persons, what right then has this author to make any difference between them? How does he venture to assert that the inspired writers have so confounded the names of ministers that *his* superior discrimination is necessary to set them right?

Having acknowledged that they were originally the same, the

author proceeds to show how the subsequent alterations took place. It appears from his account that the change was gradual. Like other corruptions of the church, prelacy was silently introduced. It advanced by degrees, until at last, its yoke becoming intolerable, it was cast off by almost all the churches of the Reformation. Prelacy did not at once mount the throne of spiritual despotism in the church, and exhibit all its earthliness and pride. It did not at once burst upon the world in the aspect of intolerance which it afterwards assumed in the ages of papal tyranny. Its introduction was silent—its progress gradual.

Had the author of the "Sermons on the Church" borne in mind this fact, he needed not have felt the wonder which he expresses in page 192, that Christians were so long "silent on the subject of this innovation upon the purity of the system provided by the Saviour."

But it is further argued: "We rely upon facts and things—not upon changing appellations. The fact is, that the New Testament and all antiquity speaks of, recognises, defines the duties of a certain officer in the church, be his title what it may, who was superior to his brethren in the ministry, to whom appertained offices which they could not discharge." (page 183.) Where is the authority in Scripture for this assertion? We might surely expect that a Protestant minister, solemnly proclaiming that he had the New Testament on his side, would condescend to furnish one text upon the subject. But no. Instead of this we are referred, first to Ambrose, a writer of the fourth century, and then to others whose testimony cannot be admitted upon a point that the Scriptures only can decide. He has quoted the Fathers—let us go to the New Testament and examine what it says regarding ministers of the Gospel. Scripture evidence on this point is thus well and briefly stated by Powell on Apostolical Succession.

I. The word Bishop, *ἐπισκοπος*, is never used in the *New Testament* to signify the office of oversight over MINISTERS but only over the FLOCK of Christ. Acts, xx, 28; 1 Pet. v, 2, 3.

II. Bishops and Presbyters have the SAME QUALIFICATIONS. Titus, i, 5—7; 1 Tim. iii, 1, 2, &c.; Acts, xx, 17, 28.

III. Bishops and Presbyters have the SAME ORDINATION. Acts, xx, 17, 28; Tit. i, 5—7.

IV. Bishops and Presbyters have the SAME DUTIES. 1 Tim. iii, 2, 4, 5; v, 17, together with proofs as above.

V. Bishops and Presbyters have the *same power and authority*. In the above passages no distinction is made, neither is there any in the New Testament, at least in *favour of bishops*.

VI. Presbyters and bishops have the same names promiscuously, as implying the *same office*. That the names are used indiscriminately is not denied. These things are surely enough to prove their *identity*, or at least that bishops were not superior to Presbyters. But we go farther:—

VII. *Presbyters ONLY* are expressly said to ordain: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” Tim. iv, 14.

VIII. The apostles sometimes call *themselves* Presbyters, but *never* Bishops.

IX. Presbyters are mentioned as joining the apostles in the council at Jerusalem, but *no* express mention is made of *bishops*. Acts, xv, 2, 4, 6, 22, 23.

X. The collections for the poor at Jerusalem are to be sent to the Presbyters, and *no* mention is made of Bishops. Acts, xi, 30.

XI. It is well known that each church containing the congregation of a city and its suburbs, was, in the apostles’ time, the whole diocese. It was never called Diocese by the earliest Christian writers; the term Parish was the only appellation. Now *Presbyters* are the *only* ministers expressly mentioned as having the oversight and government of the churches planted by Paul and Barnabas: Acts, xiv, 23, “And when they had ordained them elders (presbyters) in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.”

If any are yet disposed to say, in the face of all this evidence, that the offices of bishop and presbyter were different in the primitive church, let me submit to them another consideration. The apostles were accustomed to give very minute directions to those persons whom they addressed. They salute individual ministers and private Christians, both men and women, by name, but they never say one syllable regarding a higher grade of ministers. They give frequent and exact directions respecting the duties of presbyters, and deacons,

but they *never* speak of duties to be attended to by dignitaries superior to them. If, as we are told, the *offices* were different, we might surely have expected to find a class of particular instructions suited to their respective ranks and duties. If to the prelate alone belongs the power of ordination and government, how can he be addressed respecting his peculiar duties in common with persons who have no such power? Would it be rational to suppose that the chief magistrate of our city should have no other instructions given him than those addressed to his constables? Might we not have expected that the apostles, when addressing any of the churches, would have paid the first and greatest attention to that order appointed to succeed them, that order without which we are told that the Christian church can have neither form nor government nor ministry nor sacraments, no nor even existence? ¹ It is impossible to believe that this order should first be instituted by the apostles, and then be passed over with marked neglect when they were writing to the churches, and at the very time when their inferiors were specially named. How then are we to remove this difficulty? The simple way of removing it is this. No reference is made to bishops as superior to presbyters, because there were no such bishops in existence.

We still assert then, that the change of names proves a change of things. At what time after the completion of the sacred volume this may have happened does not affect the argument at all. If it could be proved that the change took place twenty years after the canon of Scripture was closed, or twenty hours after the death of the apostles, it would prove nothing. It is of no consequence how the terms Bishop or Presbyter were used in *after* times. We abide by the New Testament. There, beyond all controversy, they signify one and the same order of rulers, and we therefore insist that the same terms ought to mean the same things that the apostles meant by them. The *after* change of application in the scriptural titles on which Episcopalians so much depend, proves a change from the original system of the church. The earlier they can show this to have taken place, the earlier do they prove the introduction of a system that had no authority from the word of God.

¹ "No Bishop, no Church," is a current maxim among the adherents of Prelacy.

NOTE D, p. 89.

This argument might be considerably expanded by reference to the constitution of other churches in the Apostolic age. The early churches of Jerusalem, Corinth, and Rome, were undoubtedly constituted on the Scriptural principle, each having a number of rulers, equal in rank and power. The system of government that prevailed among them affords not the slightest justification for the assumption of prelatical authority, and still less for that to which it led, the usurpation of the Pope of Rome.

NOTE E, p. 92.

The principal reformers and most eminent divines of the Church of England were clearly of opinion that bishops and priests were not two things, but one office, in the beginning of Christ's religion. Abundant evidence of their views regarding the Christian ministry may be found in Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i; M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. i, p. 386, 4th edition; and also in the second volume of the works of the Rev. Joseph Boyse. A few passages are quoted from the substantial writings of the last named author. After giving the recorded opinions of Cranmer, Alley, Pilkington, Jewel, Willet, and others, he proceeds: "Bishop Morton, in his Apol. Cath. tells the Roman Catholics, 'that the power of order and jurisdiction which they ascribe to bishops doth, de jure divino, belong to other presbyters, and particularly that to ordain is their ancient right.'" Dr. Whitaker, that learned defender of the Protestant cause, making his remarks on St. Jerome's telling us, that "the difference between bishops and presbyters was brought in by men, long after the apostles, as a remedy against schism," observes that "*the remedy is almost worse than the malady, for it begat and brought in the pope, with his monarchy, into the church.*" —Whitaker de Eccl. Regim. Dr. Laurence Humphrey, and Dr. Holland, both of them professors at one of the English universities, maintained the doctrine of the Scriptural bishop and presbyter being the same. The latter was so offended with Dr.

Laud for his asserting, in his disputation for his degrees, that “episcopacy, as a distinct order from presbytery, was of divine and necessary right,” that he told him “he was a schismatick, and went about to make a division between the English and other reformed churches.” To these may be added the judgment of the learned archbishop Ussher, who took not episcopacy to be a distinct order from presbytery, but only a superiority of degree in the same order.

These testimonies have been quoted for the benefit of unprejudiced members of the Church of England who may peruse these pages. They will see that the Presbyterian doctrine of ministerial equality is not only the doctrine of Scripture, but was held by the worthiest divines of their own church; and I trust they will be convinced of the impropriety at the present day, of pouring contempt upon a system which the most learned and pious episcopalians have acknowledged to be founded upon the Word of God.

The same sentiments were expressed by Luther, and were embodied in the standards of almost all the reformed churches on the continent. For instance, the French Protestants are presbyterians, and state the following as a leading article of their faith. “Nous croyons (Matt. xx, 26, 27) tous vrais Pasteurs, en quelque lieu qu’ils soient, avoir même autorité et égale puissance sous un seul chef, seul souverain, et seul universel Évêque, Jesus Christ; et pour cette cause, que nulle Eglise ne doit prétendre aucune domination ou seigneurie sur l’autre.”

The declaration of the Helvetic churches is equally explicit. “*La puissance des ministres est la même ou égale. Tous les ministres ont reçu pour le fonds un même pouvoir, ou une fonction égale dans l’église. Il est certain qu’au commencement les évêques et les prêtres gouvernaient l’église en commun. Aucun d’eux ne se préférait à un autre; aucun ne s’arrogeait un pouvoir plus étendu, ni une domination sur les autres évêques ses collègues; ils se souvenaient de ces paroles du Seigneur: “Que celui qui voudra être le premier entre nous, soit votre serviteur;”* Matt. xxi, 27,) ils se contenaient dans l’humilité, et s’aidaient mutuellement pour gouverner l’église.”—Confession de Foi Helvétique, 121.

The Synod of Dort, representing the Reformed Church of

Germany, adopted the confession of faith belonging to the Belgic church. The thirty-first article contains this statement: "As regards the ministers of the Divine word, they have every where the same power and authority."

A note is appended to the "Sermons on the Church," headed "Modern Research," which is intended to show that the Syrian church of Malabar is at present prelatical in its government. The writer quotes from Dr. Buchanan's *Christian Researches*; but he has omitted to mention what is there stated respecting the previous history of these churches. About the beginning of the sixteenth century, "the Portuguese, on their arrival, were surprised to find upwards of a hundred Christian churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship they were offended." In consequence of this, every art of persuasion and force was tried to bring these simple people to adopt the Romish system, and especially to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. These attempts appear to have been partially successful in corrupting their worship and discipline. The Inquisition was established in their neighbourhood, and a Synod held, at which a Romish archbishop presided. One of the accusations brought, at this time, against the Syrian Christians was, "that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the church than priest and deacon." Dr. Buchanan visited these churches in 1806. He was anxious to effect a union between them and the Church of England, and for this purpose had an interview with some of the clergy. Of course, we might have expected that such a tempting offer would have been eagerly embraced, and that these poor and humble Christians would have rejoiced at the prospect of being united to a church, not only the richest in the world, but which boasts of apostolic ordination in all its purity. Let us mark the answer given to Dr. Buchanan's proposals. "The bishop's chaplains confessed to me that they had doubts as to English ordination. "The English," said they, "may be a warlike and great people; but their church, by your own account, is but of recent origin. Whence do you derive your ordination?" "From Rome." "You derive it from a church which is our ancient enemy, and with which we would never unite."—*Buchanan's Christian Researches*, p. 129.

NOTE F, p. 97.

The following is the account of the historian Mosheim of the time and manner in which this argument was first used: "The Christian doctors had the good fortune to persuade the people that the ministers of the Christian church succeeded to the character, rights, and privileges of the Jewish priesthood; and this persuasion was a new source both of honours and profit to the sacred order. This notion was propagated with industry some time after the death of Adrian, when the second destruction of Jerusalem had extinguished among the Jews all hopes of seeing their government restored to its former lustre, and their country arising out of ruins. And, accordingly, the bishops considered themselves invested with a rank and character similar to those of the high priest among the Jews, while the presbyters represented the priests, and the deacons the Levites. It is indeed, highly probable that they who first introduced this absurd comparison of offices, so entirely distinct, did it rather through ignorance and error than through artifice or design. The notion, however, once introduced, produced its natural effects, and these effects were pernicious. The errors to which it gave rise were many, and one of its immediate consequences was, the establishment of a greater difference between the Christian pastors and their flock than the genius of the Gospel seems to admit."—Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, voi. i, p. 179.

NOTE G, p. 99.

The original word, *Κρινω*, employed by James in the council at Jerusalem, occurs in several other passages of the New Testament, and its proper meaning may be ascertained by reference to a few of these.

(Luke, vii, 43,) "Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged" (*ορθῶς ἔκρινας*). Simon's judgment was certainly not an official sentence, it was only his own opinion. (John, vii, 24,) "Judge not (*Μὴ κρίνετε*) according to the appearance, but judge

righteous judgment (Κρίσιν Κρίνατε). (Acts, xiii, 46,) "Seeing ye judge yourselves (Κρίνετε) unworthy." (2 Cor. v, 14,) "The love of Christ constraineth¹ us, because we thus judge" (Κρίναντας τοῦτο).

In all these instances the same word is used as that employed by James, meaning evidently nothing more than what he intended to give, the expression of opinion, or the result of reflection.

This view has been adopted by the present bishop of London, (Bloomfield,) who, in his Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, page 154, speaks of the "proposition" made by James, and of the "requirements" as being "all the result of discussion and deliberation."

I am happy to be able to add to the above the testimony of Mr. Boyd himself, who, in his sermon on the "Offices, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church," (page 135,) informs us that "The apostles and elders came together to consider of the matter, and THEY issued this decree."

In the "Sermons on the Church," page 54, it is said, "The manner in which this apostle is distinguished from other ministers in that metropolis in the narrative of Paul's interview, is utterly inexplicable upon any other ground than that of his being of superior station to them. "The day following Paul went in unto James, and all the elders were present." How does the simple fact of their calling at a certain brother's house prove that he was of "superior station"? Let me suppose a parallel case. A number of ministers from a distance meet in this city. The day following they call upon me. Who would dream from such a trivial circumstance that I possessed prelatical authority? The advocates of prelacy find it very difficult to prop up the episcopal throne when they have recourse to such an argument as this.

NOTE H, p. 100.

The postscripts are of no authority whatever.—Paul exhorted Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist," but it was not his pen, or that of any inspired writer, that styled Timothy and Titus bishops at the end of the epistles addressed to them. "The subscriptions annexed to the epistles," says Horne, an episcopal writer, "are manifestly spurious***The subscription annexed to ¹he first epistle to Timothy is evidently the production of a writer

of the age of Constantine the Great, and could not have been written by the Apostle Paul; for it states that epistle to have been written to Timothy, from Laodicea, the chief city of Phrygia Pacatiana; whereas the country of Phrygia was not divided into the two provinces of *Phrygia Prima* or *Pacatiana*, and *Phrygia Secunda*, until the fourth century. According to Dr. Mill, the subscriptions were added by Euthalius, bishop of Sulca, in Egypt, who published an edition of the Acts, Epistles of St. Paul, and of the epistles, about the middle of the fifth century. But, whoever was the author of the subscriptions, it is evident that he was either grossly ignorant, or grossly inattentive.”—Horne’s Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, vol. ii, page 155.

NOTE I, p. 104.

Driven from Scripture the advocates of episcopacy fly to the fathers for assistance.—When testimonies of antiquity are brought forward in support of prelacy, the same quotations are usually made by episcopal writers, totally regardless of the fact that they have been again and again refuted. Mr. Rhind has attacked the presbyterian system, and quoted the passages from Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clemens Romanus, which we find in the “Sermons on the Church,” pp. 68, 69, 186. He was most ably answered by Anderson, minister at Dunbarton, who thus notices his testimony from Irenæus.

“We can enumerate those who were instituted bishops in the several churches by the apostles, even to ourselves. The apostolic state of the church is known through all the world by the succession of bishops, to whom the apostles gave power to rule and govern the church.”—Lib. iii, c. 3.

It is answered, first, supposing Irenæus were against us, yet his judgment about traditions is of no great weight. For in the same chapter which has been cited, he asserts not only the pre-eminence of the Church of Rome, but the necessary dependence of all other churches upon her. And elsewhere he asserts Christ to have been past the *fortieth* and near the *fiftieth* year of his age when he suffered, and he is very angry with those who think otherwise. When he stumbled so prodigiously in so plain a case, pray what credit is to be given to his traditions about the succes-

sion of bishops, which is generally acknowledged by Episcopalians themselves to be a most perplexed and uncertain piece of history?

Again, there is no need either of declining Irenæus' testimony or refining upon his words. For that the apostles appointed bishops in the churches every Presbyterian owns. But that they appointed prelates or diocesan bishops no Episcopalian has yet proved. If they will still go on to expose themselves by insisting upon the word *bishop*, nobody can help it. Presbyterians must take care they be not imposed upon by mere sounds. It is certain that Irenæus took bishop and presbyter for one and the same officer. "Wherefore," saith he, "it behoves us to hearken to those who are presbyters, in the church, to those who, as we have shown, have their succession from the apostles; who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have also received the gift of the truth, according to the pleasure of the Father." Thus, Irenæus—"And what strange confusion," says Stillingfleet, "must this cause in any one's mind that seeks for a succession of episcopal power over presbyters from the apostles by the testimony of Irenæus, when he so plainly attributes both the succession to presbyters and the episcopacy too, which he speaks of."

Anderson notices, in a manner equally satisfactory, the quotation from Tertullian, and concludes—"I have now gone through his antiquity, and hope that it is plain, that when he was entering upon it he might have spared his harangue, wherein he would persuade Presbyterians to appeal to the Fathers; for I can hardly believe he has gained much by referring to these judges. And if his own conscience be satisfied with these testimonies he has produced, I must needs say it is no ill-natured one."

It would be no difficult task to show that the testimony of the Fathers, so far from being opposed to the presbyterian system, is decidedly in its favour. I shall content myself with quoting the opinion of the learned bishop Stillingfleet upon this point. "I believe upon the strictest inquiry, Medina's judgment will prove true, that Nieron, Austin, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, were all of the same judgment as to the identity of both name and order of bishops and presbyters in the primitive church."

NOTE J, p. 105.

It is pleasing to know, that there never was a period in the history of the church when all had apostatised from the purity of the faith. Even in the darkest ages, the purity and simplicity of apostolic times were preserved by some. "It is now generally admitted that the primitive church of Ireland, though not free from error, differed most materially, and for a length of time, from that of Rome. The free and commanded use of the Scriptures, the inculcation of the doctrines of grace, and of the efficacy of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ, without any allusion to the mass, to transubstantiation, purgatory, human merit, or prayers for the dead—the diversity in the forms of celebrating Divine worship—the rejection of the papal supremacy—the marriage of the clergy—the *Scriptural character of early bishops, each having the charge of only one parish, and being labourers in word and doctrine*—the presbyterial order of the Culdees, and their singular piety and zeal—all their important points of doctrine and discipline, which were maintained and practised in the ancient Irish church, clearly indicate its opposition to the papal system."¹

St. Patrick is said by Ussher to have instituted 365 bishoprics, which we must suppose to have been parochial charges, one or more bishops presiding in each congregation. The following extract will show the extent of Irish bishoprics at the time to which it refers: "By a canon of a general council holden by Paparo at Kells, A.D. 1152, the village bishoprics of that diocese were converted into rural deaneries; and this was adopted and enforced by a Synod holden A.D. 1216, by Simon, bishop of Meath. Thus Athenry, Clonard, Kells, Slane, Screen, and Dimshaghlin, became rural deaneries from village bishoprics."—Dr. Mason's Catholic Religion of St. Patrick and St. Columbkil, p. 17, note.

NOTE K, p. 108.

How dreadful this sentence of excommunication!—It is neces-

¹ The above is an extract from the valuable History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, vol. i, by Dr. Reid, professor of ecclesiastical history for the Synod of Ulster.

sary, though painful, to quote some of the uncharitable expressions of prelatists respecting those not belonging to their communion, expressions which stand out in broad and striking contrast with the sentiments of the early reformers in the Church of England. "The devout participation of the holy eucharist will appear *indispensably necessary* to salvation. None can possess authority to administer the sacraments but those who received a commission from the *bishops* of the church. It must be *essential*, therefore, to the *efficacy* of the Lord's Supper, that it be administered by those who have received *lawful* authority."—Hobart's Companion to the Altar. Bishop Skinner has asserted that "no scheme of ecclesiastical polity can conduct Christians to salvation but *diocesan* episcopacy." The following declarations are taken from among many others of a similar kind from a "Treatise on the Church," published in Belfast in 1813, by Edward Barwick, of Trinity College, Dublin. "Christ and his holy apostles instituted but one form of church government and communion, and confined the covenanted means of salvation to the living members of this one communion, and to *none other*." —Preface, xv.

"Without an episcopal commission the word cannot be preached nor the sacraments administered with any effect or validity. We can no more lay aside episcopacy, and yet continue the Christian priesthood, than we can alter the terms of salvation and yet be in covenant with God."—Page 85. "The promises of the Gospel are *exclusively* directed to the faithful, the obedient, and the charitable members of Christ's one apostolic church, and those who lightly separate themselves from the church, and yet hope for salvation, must hope *without promise and without Scripture*."—Page 180. Dr. Hook, the present Vicar of Leeds, author of the sermon on "*Hear the Church*," preached before Her Majesty in June last, states the following in one of his discourses: "You will observe how important all this is which I have now laid down. Unless Christ be spiritually present with the ministers of religion in their services, those services will be *vain*. But the only administrations to which he has promised his presence is to those of the *bishops* who are *successors* of the first commissioned apostles and the other clergy acting under *their* sanction and by *their* authority."

But it may be said that the opinions of a few bigotted churchmen should not be charged upon the body to which they belong. I am well convinced that many pious episcopalians disapprove of such sentiments and language, but it is to be lamented that the canons of their church breathe much of the same spirit. For instance, the fifth canon of the Church in Ireland stands thus : “ Whosoever shall separate themselves from the communion of saints, as it is approved by the apostles’ rules in the Church of Ireland, and combine themselves together in a new brotherhood, accounting the Christians who are conformable to the doctrine, government, rites, and ceremonies of the Church of Ireland, to be profane and unmeet for him to join with in Christian profession ; or shall affirm and maintain, that there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations than such as by the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful churches, LET HIM BE EXCOMMUNICATED, and not restored until he repent and publicly revoke his error.”

It is consolatory for Presbyterians to turn from these fearful denunciations of fallible men to the word of God, and to be assured by Him who will be their judge, that “ *the curse causeless shall not come.*”—Prov. xxvi, 2.

NOTE L, p. 109.

Exclusive application of the title THE Church.—The very title “ Sermons on *the Church* ” savours of great illiberality. Does the author intend to intimate, as his words would lead us to suppose, that his is the *only* church ? This haughty assumption is not uncommon among episcopalian writers. We have “ Essays on *the Church*,” to which Mr. Boyd acknowledges himself indebted. And a work has lately issued from the press by Bishop Russell, entitled “ The History of *the Church in Scotland*,” by which he means the small body of episcopal dissenters, and intimates, what others have roundly asserted, that the Established Church of that kingdom should not be recognised as a church of Christ at all. How much does this resemble the spirit and conduct of him of whom the apostle John complains, “ who loveth to have the præminence, prating against us with malicious words,

and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”—3 John, 9, 10.

NOTE M, p. 112.

Pernicious Doctrines have spread extensively in the Church of England.—An interesting article upon this subject appeared in the February number of the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, one of the best religious periodicals of the day. After stating the well-known fact, that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Roman Catholic priests took orders in the Church of England for the purpose of undermining the Protestant faith, the writer traces through the several succeeding reigns a continual leaven of Popery from the first down to the present day. The principles of the Roman Catholic system are now openly taught in the colleges of the English church. With the doctrines of that system the minds of its future ministers are being deeply imbued, and this not by stealth, but openly, and by the professors upon whose instructions they are required to attend.

This party, which of late has shown itself more prominently in the Church of England, meditates a change in the constitution, rites, and liturgy of the church, in order to bring it nearer to what they themselves call their “sister” of Rome. That this is their object they glory in asserting. “So successful has been this new college “de propaganda” that, at this moment, they possess an influence which is all but sovereign in the church; and nothing, we are verily persuaded, prevents their acting upon their principles out and out, but a salutary fear of the Church of Scotland, of the English dissenters, and of the spirit of the age.”¹

The Rev. James Graham, curate of the cathedral, Londonderry, has faithfully recorded his views in the Derry Sentinel, October, 1838. The following passages are extracted from his letter:—“This new school of theologians are evidently dissatisfied with the Church of England as she now stands, on the ground that she is “too Protestant,” to use a phrase of their own, and they seek for a return to principles and practices from which at the time of the Reformation our ancestors deemed it expedient to

¹ See Edinburgh Christian Instructor, February, 1839.

dissent." "They require us to receive not only views upon baptism, the reverse of our twenty-seventh article, but wish to return to exorcisms, by which the Christian priesthood are to expel the devil at baptism, besides those unsound sentiments upon tradition, and the eucharist, and an approval of prayers for the dead. They deplore the loss of the Romish ritual, and entertain the question whether it could not be safely restored."

"These are views of the 'Tracts for the Times,'" Mr. Graham adds, "which I can assure you I have not gathered either from the reports of prejudiced persons, or from any garbled or unfair quotations. I have known the books themselves, and I am persuaded that *their authors have very strong tendencies to Popery.*" After this statement, from an authority so respectable, every Protestant must feel that these doctrines are pernicious. But living as we do at a distance from the place where they are principally promulgated, it may be thought that the reports of their *extent* may have been exaggerated.

I quote, therefore, from the London Correspondent of the Derry Sentinel, October, 1838:—"Your excellent pastor, Mr. Graham, was far mistaken in supposing that the awful heresies of the Oxford Tract writers were not obtaining a footing in this country. The fact is they are every where creeping into houses, and into churches too." In the same article an extract is given from the seventy-fifth number of these "Tracts for the Times," which is *recommended* to the use of Protestants, "*HOLY MARY and all the saints intercede for us to the Lord that we may be worthy of his help and salvation who liveth and reigneth world without end.*"

The following testimony is quoted in order to prove the great prevalence of these errors in the Church of England. It is that of the Rev. Henry Allen, formerly curate of the Chapel of Ease, Londonderry, but, for some years back, vicar of St. Mary lé Wigford, Lincoln, a clergyman whose situation gives him every opportunity of being accurately acquainted with the views of his brethren in the ministry. In a letter upon this subject, he quotes with approbation, a hymn, commencing—

"Ave Maria, Mother blest;"

he gives it as his opinion that the compilers of the Prayer Book maintained the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and declares that

“The writers of the Oxford tracts deserve any thing but the condemnation of honest churchmen, and *the greater number of the clergy* with whom I am acquainted feel that *they are zealous and able advocates of the TRUTH.*”

How strange the boast—“No peace with Rome!”—Sermons on the Church, p. 35.

NOTE N, p. 113.

Presbyterians form the great majority of the Protestant population in the north of Ireland. In many districts there are more than ten Presbyterians for one Episcopalian. Yet, notwithstanding their present strength and growing importance, their principles are little understood. They are most erroneously supposed by some to be inimical to an established church, while by others they are represented as a body of Arians. It is right that their views upon such points should be made known to prevent their “good from being evil spoken of,” and to secure that charity and good will which might be lost through ignorance or misconception. These discourses, though more immediately called forth by the circumstances stated in the text, may be useful in these respects. The present statement of our views respecting the constitution of the Christian church may, it is true, excite some temporary dissatisfaction, but we trust that it will eventually be productive of permanent good. Truth will never suffer by the most rigid examination. The following are just observations of Mr. M’Neile, of Liverpool:—“Whatever may be said, and truly said, about the acrimonious spirit in which religious controversy is usually conducted, still it is a recognised fact, that the most prosperous times of the church have been times of controversy. In this deadening world, we have much more to fear, *as Christians*, from stagnation, than from storms. Indifference, at heart, to the distinguishing peculiarities of vital truth, concealed beneath a superficial bustle about outwardly useful things, is far from a prosperous state. The ease and harmony and seeming unanimity engendered by it, are fatal symptoms of a growing, though disclaimed latitudinarianism. An intruder upon the fascinating spell is condemned as an enemy to peace. And since the bond of its union is not the depth of truth, the man who presses forward

any deep truth, whatever his particular view of it may be, is deemed an intruder; not in reference to *what* he says, for that is not carefully examined, but in reference to his saying *any* thing which every body else does not say. It would not, indeed, sound well to bring the real accusation against him, to wit, that he is a searcher into more of the truth of God than is usually brought forward; and that he proclaims what he knows with the boldness of honest enthusiasm, uncaring consequences; this were an honourable charge; it suits better the temper of the times to charge him with a breach of love, a want of brotherly kindness, a harsh Ishmaelitic spirit."—M'Neile's Lectures on the Jewish Nation—Preface vii.

END OF NOTES TO DISCOURSE II.

DISCOURSE III.

BY THE REV. JAMES DENHAM,
LONDONDERRY.

*The Officers and Government of the Presbyterian Church
—Her Spiritual Independence—Presbyterians not
Disloyal—The Principle of Church Establishments
Asserted—Reasons why we cannot become Members
of the English Church—Advantages of Presby-
terianism.*

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever.”—ISAIAH, ix, 6, 7.

THAT this passage refers to Christ is manifest from the fact, that the first two verses of the chapter are quoted by Matthew, (iv, 14—16,) and the text by Luke, (i, 32, 33,) as applicable to Messiah. It is said that the government shall be upon his shoulder, probably alluding to the ancient custom of persons invested with power carrying the ensigns of it on their shoulders. Thus it is said, in Isa. xxii, 22, “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open.” It is further prophesied of Christ, that he should sit upon the throne of David and reign over his kingdom, to order it and to establish it for ever. This we are not to

understand literally of the material throne and territorial dominion of David, but of that spiritual kingdom typified by Israel, and over which Christ shall rule for ever. To him is given of the Father all authority and power in heaven and earth, for the establishment and defence of the church: "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." "God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." He is declared to be "a son over his own house"—"The head of the body, the church"—"Lord of hosts"—"Lord of all"—"King of kings": *As such* he "gave commandments to the apostles;" and the church is called upon to "fulfill the law of Christ." She is required to meet in *his name*, to observe *his* ordinances, to submit to *his* officers, ruling under him and according to his directions, and to acknowledge no other *spiritual* head, or lord, or master, for *one* is her Master, even Christ.

In addressing you this evening, I shall endeavour to show,—*That Christ has instituted a peculiar form of government for his church, which is the Presbyterian form.*

This has been denied by two classes of writers. Those who hold the views of Erastus say, that it belongs to the civil magistrate to fix what shall be the form of the church's government. Our Lord well knew that none of the kings of the earth would be converted to Christianity for the first 300 years, and

according to this scheme, he must have designed that his church should have no government during that period. And if it could subsist so long under the trying circumstances in which it was then placed without a government, we see no reason why it might not always do so. But this is a theory so unscriptural and so full of absurdity as might well stagger the most sycophantic flatterers of kings.

Others say that Christ has given no definite form,¹ and that his directions or hints on the subject are so loose and general, that men may adopt whatever form seems to them best. This is argued by a late writer on the ground that no mention is made in the New Testament of the ordination of many who preached the Gospel. He does not pretend to affirm that the sacred historian says they were *not* ordained,—but because their ordination is not fully recorded, he wisely concludes they received none. Hume in his history of England has occasion to speak of judges, of whose elevation to the bench he says nothing, are we therefore to conclude they were not regularly invested with their office? Where there was such a vast number of believers, and of course very many preachers, an account of each ordination would have been a very useless repetition. It is enough that a few cases are fully recorded to establish and explain the appointment of Christ's officers. But even had we no positive statement, it is reasonable to suppose such officers would be appointed in the church. We know it is essential to the well-being of any society that it shall be under the control of laws; but laws, however wise and excellent, are of no use unless

¹ See Note A.

officers are appointed to apply them. In the church persons are often found who, if left to themselves, and without being under control, would subvert all her order, destroy her peace, prevent her usefulness, injure her character, and dishonour her king. It is therefore indispensable that an authority be exercised by which the thoughtless shall be restrained, the weak strengthened, and the guilty either brought to repentance or expelled. And can we suppose that her Lord and Lawgiver should leave her destitute of what appears essential to her existence as a visible society? It may be said, He has given laws to direct our conduct, and thus protects his church. But seeing he is himself gone into the heavens, where he shall remain till coming to judgment, we again ask, Of what avail those laws for this purpose when, without an executive, they are left to be obeyed or trampled on according to the caprice of every one admitted into the society?

Under the Old Testament dispensation a government existed in the church, which guarded the ordinances of God and separated between the clean and the unclean; and if in the church there are still found unsound members, should there not be some means by which Christ's institutions shall be preserved from prostitution and contempt? Hath God laid the government on Christ's shoulder to order and to establish his kingdom? Then we cannot believe that he has left his church in utter disorder—that he has left it without a government. Why, even in the church above, where sin and selfishness are unknown, in his own person there is a government exercised, to which all bow, and under which all is har-

mony and peace. But how much more necessary must an efficient control be in the church on earth, where may be found in active operation the unsubdued passions of false professors and the waywardness even of God's own children. Such control cannot now be exercised by Christ personally, since he is gone away; and if it exist at all it must be under a regular fixed form of government, sustained by wise and active and intelligent and faithful officers; men who shall affectionately but fearlessly use their authority in the church to correct irregularities, remove scandals, and unite all the members in the bonds of a holy brotherhood. Yet in this I would not have your faith to stand in the wisdom of man, but rather in statements of the inspired record. I do not claim your obedience to such officers on the ground of its reasonableness and its necessity, but on the far higher ground that it is commanded you of Him who "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand."

In 1 Cor. xii, 28, it is declared that "*God hath set in the church 'governments.'*" In 2 Cor. x, 8, Paul speaks these words, "*Our authority which the Lord hath given us;*" and this authority he desired the rulers of the church to exercise "*in the name of the Lord Jesus,*" by casting out a wicked man from among them. In Acts, xx, 28, he desires the elders to "*take heed of the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.*" From these passages we learn, that the rulers in the church do not exercise their authority because *they* deem government essential, but because *God* hath set them in the church. The *Lord* gave them their authority—the *Holy Ghost* made them overseers. Nor do the

members obey because of any supposed reasonableness in the duty, but because they are commanded of God "to obey those who have the rule over them, and submit themselves, for they watch for their souls."

And now, having cleared away objections to the existence of a government in the church, we come to the important question, By whom shall that government be exercised? By Prelates? You have had it demonstrated to you that no such class of officers exists in a scripturally constituted church. In such a church there are bishops or overseers or elders, all of whom bear rule, though some perform also the higher duty of preaching. Those who do not preach are usually distinguished by the title of "*Ruling Elders*." It is not unusual for those who dislike our form of church government to assert that "ruling elders" were first employed by Calvin, and have no authority in the word of God. How utterly groundless is this assertion, I hope I shall be able to show you by a reference to the Bible.

From the Old Testament we learn, that the Jews generally chose persons of prudence and experience to occupy places of authority. These, being usually advanced in years, were called elders; and the title came gradually to be applied to a person filling an office, without reference to his age. In Egypt Moses called the elders together. In the wilderness a council of seventy elders was formed by the command of God to assist Moses. In every city elders were appointed—of whom some ruled in *civil*, and others in *ecclesiastical* matters. We often find the distinction made between the judges and the elders, and

still more accurately is this marked in the New Testament. The elders of the Jewish *church* are distinctly spoken of. Thus, in Mark, v, 22, it is said, "There cometh one of the rulers *of the Synagogue.*" In Acts, xiii, 15, "The rulers *of the Synagogue* sent unto them." The Jews only went up three times each year to worship at the *temple*, so that the synagogues were their ordinary places of worship. In them the Scriptures were read and expounded each Sabbath, public prayer offered up, and provision made for taking care of the poor and maintaining discipline. There were never fewer than *three* elders who ruled in the synagogue; but in large cities there were often a great many more. Now in speaking of the officers of the new dispensation, reference is often made to the *temple* and *its priests* and *its ritual*; and it is attempted to be shown that the church of Christ should be modeled after that ritual. But in this attempt the fact is lost sight of, that the temple, and the temple service, were local and temporary and typical, and that the priesthood was utterly abolished by the death of Christ. The forms of the synagogue being more simple, and fitted, not for Judea alone, but for all nations and all times, IT is evidently the model on which the Christian church is reared. But, as I may be considered partial in my views, allow me to quote to you what is said by Bishop Burnet.¹ "In the synagogue, there was first one that was called the Bishop of the congregation; next the three judges, called by the Greeks elders. These ordered and determined every thing that concerned the synagogue or the persons in it. Next to

¹ See Observations on the 1st and 2nd Canons.

them were the three deacons, whose charge was to gather the collections of the rich and distribute them to the poor. Now the nature of Christian worship shows evidently that it came in the room of the synagogue, which was *moral*, and *not* of the *temple* worship, which was typical and ceremonial. Likewise this parity of customs betwixt Jews and Christians was such, that it made them be taken by the Romans and other observers for one sect of religion. And finally, any that will impartially read the New Testament will find that when the forms of government or worship are treated of, it is not done with such architectural exactness as was necessary if a *new* thing had been instituted, which we find practised by Moses. But the apostles rather speak as those who give rules for the ordering and directing of what was *already* in being. From all which it seems well grounded and rational to assume, that the first constitution of the Christian churches was taken from the model of the synagogue, in which the elders were separated for the discharge of their employments by an imposition of the hands, as all Jewish writers do clearly witness."

Neander, at present professor in the university of Berlin, a most distinguished scholar, and who was himself a Jew, says, "The government of the early Christian church was directed by a spirit of love and counsel and prayer, and adds,—We may suppose that when any thing could be found in the way of church forms, consistent with this spirit, it would be appropriated by the Christian community. Now there happened to be in the Jewish synagogue a system of government of this nature, (not monarchical,

but rather aristocratical) or a government of the most venerable and excellent. A council of elders conducted the affairs of that body. It seemed most natural that Christianity, developing itself from the Jewish religion, should take *this form* of government."

Having thus seen the system of worship and discipline established in the Jewish churches, and established, we believe, (not as the writer of the Sermons on "The Church," would have us to suppose,) by the wisdom of *self-constituted* ceremony-makers, but under the immediate direction of some of those inspired men raised up by God to guide his people, and establish all things in Israel, we come to enquire whether, in the organization of Christian churches, the apostles took *this* as their model.

In not a single instance in the New Testament are any of Christ's *officers* designated by the term used to signify a sacrificing priest. No altar is raised, no oblation is offered. This whole system has been abolished by its consummation in the sacrifice of our great High Priest. But we have very frequently mentioned as officers of the church, bishops, or elders and deacons: "Acts, xiv, 23, They ordained them *elders* in every church." "Acts, xx, 17: He sent to Ephesus and called the *elders* of the church." "James, v, 14: Is any sick among you, let him call for the *elders* of the church." "1 Pet. v, 1: The *elders* which are among you I exhort: Feed the flock."¹ "Tit. i, 5: Ordain *elders* in every city." "Heb. xiii, 17: Obey *them* that have the rule over you." From

¹ The Greek, here translated "Feed," is in the New Testament frequently rendered "*Rule*." See Matt. ii, 6; Rev. ii, 27—xii, 5—xix, 15.

these texts you learn that every church had more than one elder; that these several elders ruled over it; and to their authority the people were called to submit. That these should have been all *preachers* is an opinion highly improbable. Many of the congregations must have been very small; and while the harvest of an unconverted world was great and the labourers few, more than one preacher would not be spared to a single church. But on this important point we are not left to conjectures. We have express authority for a distinct class of officers who ruled in the church. In the 12th chapter of Romans the apostle compares the church to a human body regularly organised, having many members, and each having its own office for the good of the whole body. So in the church there are many members, and each is required faithfully to discharge the duty appointed him. We are told the minister must wait on his ministering, and “he that *ruleth* must do it with diligence.”

In 1 Cor. xii, 28, we have an enumeration of different officers in the church. God hath set some in the church—first, apostles—secondarily, prophets—thirdly, teachers—after that miracles, then gifts of healing,—helps,—*governments*. By miracles, the apostle evidently means, workers of miracles, as he states in the 29th verse, and by tongues, those who speak with tongues; and so by *governments* must we understand him to mean persons who exercise government. That these are *not civil* rulers is expressly stated, “God hath set *in the church*.”

In 1 Tim. v, 17, it is said, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, *espe*

cially they who labour in word and doctrine." An unprejudiced reader of the word of God, taking up this passage, would at once conclude, that when it was written there were in the church some officers who laboured in word and doctrine, that is in *preaching*, and others, whose duty it was to *rule*. This text is so plain and decisive on the point, that those who want the class of officers here spoken of, have put forth all their ingenuity to torture the passage, and silence its testimony in favour of ruling elders. A late episcopal writer,¹ in endeavouring to overturn our bench of elders, explains it by saying, "That the elder or pastor who ruled or 'presided well,' (as it reads in the original,) that is, in all his offices both of ruling and preaching, was worthy of double honour, and especially if in preaching and teaching, which were the most important of them all, he were laborious or particularly diligent." But in Scripture we cannot find any permission given to preachers not to be laborious in their awfully important work; and we cannot believe that the energetic and devoted Paul would make the unreasonable demand on any people to give "double honour" to men, who, though required by their Master to be instant in season and out of season, were yet idle drones. The interpretation must, we conceive, have sounded strangely in the ears of church dignitaries, for, if true, it most certainly places the curate above the prelate; the inferior above those now esteemed the superior clergy. It proves that the present order of things in the Church of England is not the scriptural one, for it will not be denied that

¹ Ash.

they who labour most are paid and honoured least. But that the word *especially*, as placed in the text, marks not the *degree* of labour, but a distinction of officers, is evident, not merely from the structure of the sentence, but from many other passages where it is used. Thus, “if any man provide not for his own, and *especially* for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.” “There are many vain talkers, *especially* they of the circumcision.” “Do good unto all men, but *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith.” Now, in each of these, there are two classes of persons distinguished from each other by the word *especially*,—some who were of the household of faith,—some who were not,—some of the circumcision, some not,—so in the text under consideration some elders preached, others did not,—they only ruled.

In support of this interpretation of the passage, allow me to quote to you the comment of Dr. Whitaker, an episcopalian divine, and a Regius Professor of Theology in the University of Cambridge. Of whom Bishop Hall says, “No man ever saw him without reverence, or heard him without wonder.” He writes thus—“By these words the apostle evidently distinguishes between the bishops and the inspectors of the church. If all who rule well are worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine, it is plain there were some who did not so labour; for if all had been of this description, the meaning would have been absurd; but the word *especially* points out a difference. If I should say that all who study well at the University are worthy of double honour, especially they who labour

in the study of theology, I must either mean that all do not apply themselves to the study of theology, or I should speak nonsense. Wherefore, I confess *that* to be the most genuine sense, by which pastors and teachers are distinguished from those who only governed."

In the Sermons on "The Church" the writer designates our ruling elders by the term "*lay delegates*." This means that they are of the class of the people; that they do not bear office in the church, that our beloved Zion is under the government of those who have no authority from the word of God. Thus, whilst by one prelatist, speaking from the pulpit of the Derry cathedral, the ministers of our church are stript of their commission; by another our elders are deprived of their authority. If they are called "*lay*," because they are persons generally engaged in secular employments, then, I ask, did making tents strip Paul of his official character? Or, will managing glebes strip the rectors of the present day? I say, certainly not, and neither will a similar employment strip the elders of their office. Nay, so far from depriving them of, or unfitting them for it, this rather increases their capability of ruling the church with wisdom and prudence. Ministers, on account of their particular situation, or retired course of life, are sometimes ignorant of the rules by which they should be guided in governing their people, and are ready to judge of men and things by the abstract notions they have gathered out of books, or from their own solitary musings, which do not always suit with the practical part of life. But ruling elders, being more conversant with the world, are better able

to judge what course should be pursued in difficult cases.

If they are called "*delegates*," as implying, that being chosen of the people, their office is one of merely human devising, and their authority is derived only from the people;—then, we say that the expression gives a most unfair view of our doctrine on the subject of ruling elders; believing, as we do, that they derive both their office and their authority from God. God bestows the gifts necessary to discharge the duty; through the channel of the people's election, and a regular ordination, he installs them in their office, and in his word invests them with authority. If *God* set them in the church, if the *Holy Ghost* make them overseers, if they rule *in the Lord*, then we know no higher authority which any pastor or prelate could possess. The elders guard the ordinances; expel the heretical and the unclean; deliberate on all ecclesiastical matters; and thus in the strictest sense fill a high and spiritual office in the church. They have as much authority over the people as any other bishop can have, in accordance with the laws of Christ; and are as truly ecclesiastical officers as are the pastors and teachers. The term "lay delegates" is therefore inapplicable to them; and whilst we, who preach the everlasting gospel, will not tamely submit to be publicly stripped by any prelatist of our own commission, we will be found equally ready to guard our eldership when a similar attempt is made to deprive them of theirs.

Leaving now the high ground of Scripture testimony, let us see whether such a class of officers existed in the early churches, and in those of later times,

which were preserved from bowing under the usurpation of the Romish hierarchy.

Clemens Romanus, who lived near the close of the first century, says to the Church of Corinth. "Let the flock of Christ enjoy peace, with *the elders* that are set over it."¹ Origen, who lived a little more than 200 years after Christ, says, in his third book, against Celsus—"There are some rulers appointed, whose duty it is to enquire concerning the manners and conversation of them who are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness." Ambrose, who lived in the 4th century, in his comment on 1 Tim., says—"The synagogue, and afterwards the church, had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church, which, by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not, unless perhaps by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something."

It is generally supposed that the Syrian Christians settled in the east, within the first three centuries. When discovered by the Europeans, who first sailed round the cape of Good Hope, they had never heard of the Pope of Rome. Dr. Buchanan visited one of their churches, and found three presbyters or priests, two deacons and *three elders*, acting as the office-bearers. Reinerius, who lived about 250 years before the Reformation, declares that some said the Waldenses had been since the year 314, and he adds, they are more pious than any other heretics, only they hate the Church of Rome. In their Confession of Faith, as given by M. Gillies, one of their

¹ Epistle i, 54.

pastors, it is declared that—"It is necessary for the church to have pastors to preach God's word, to administer the sacraments, and watch over the sheep of Jesus Christ,—and also *elders* and *deacons*, according to the rules of good and holy church discipline, and the practice of the *primitive* church."

Dr. Ranken, in his history of France, says of the Waldenses and Albigenses—"The pastors were assisted in the inspection of the people's morals by elders set apart for that purpose." The Bohemian brethren, in the 16th century, published their plan of government—"To the elders authority is given, either alone or in connexion with the pastor, to admonish and *rebuke* those who transgress." This, they say, had been established among them for 200 years, and maintained through much persecution.

Luther, in speaking of them, says, "Although these brethren do not excel us in purity of doctrine, yet, in the ordinary discipline of the church, which they use, and whereby they happily govern the churches, they go far beyond us, and are in this respect far more praiseworthy."

At the time of the Reformation, the office of ruling elder was generally introduced by Lutherans as well as Calvinists, and is, in the present day, retained in almost all the European Protestant churches, except those of England. Were it needful, or would time permit, I might here adduce in favour of a ruling eldership the opinions of many of the reformers, and the most distinguished divines of the English and Independent churches; but I rather hasten on to the form of government under which they exercise their authority.

I need scarcely remind you, that as individuals and apart from each other, they can perform no judicial act. When called to exercise Discipline, they must do it in a regular and formal meeting of the eldership, assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus. Thus to the rulers in the church of Corinth it is commanded: "In the name of the Lord Jesus, when ye are gathered together." Our Lord said, (Matt. xviii, 18,) "Tell it to the church—verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The elders, with the pastor presiding as moderator, form a court, usually called, in the continental churches, "*The Consistory*," and by us "*The Session*;" and in this, all matters affecting the spiritual interests of that particular church are to be deliberated on and decided. To them Christ has committed the key of discipline, and it is their province to receive members into connexion with the church, to exercise a spiritual superintendence over them, to mark any decided departure from the faith of the Gospel, or from the path of holiness, to censure the delinquent, or to bring him to trial, if found glaringly guilty to suspend him from the communion of the church, and again, on a credible profession of repentance, to remit the sentence. And this we understand to be the meaning of the passage quoted above, where Christ gives authority to his church to retain and remit sins.

Again, in Scripture, we often find a number of congregations united as one church, and representatives from each meeting in one common judicature. There are many things of common interest to several congregations which should not be determined by

any one of them; and controversies may spring up between the rulers of a congregation, or between the rulers and members of a congregation, or between two congregations, which can only be decided by some *superior* authority. It is therefore necessary, that a court shall exist, formed of representatives from a convenient district, or from a convenient number of churches, having power to arrange and regulate all matters brought by reference or appeal before it. From the vast numbers converted in Jerusalem, as stated in several places in the *Acts*, and in one place called "*many myriads*," there must have been in that city many congregations, yet *all* were called "*The church at Jerusalem*." The same remark applies to Corinth, and Ephesus, and Antioch. Now we know no reason, why all these congregations should be described as *one* church, except this, that they were under the care of one presbytery. In the Church of Antioch there was a presbytery, the names of some of whose members are recorded in *Acts*, xiii, 1, and who had the honour of ordaining Paul and Barnabas. It is also stated that Timothy was ordained by the laying on of the hands of a "*presbytery*."

We thus learn that it is in accordance with scripture example, that many congregations are placed under the care of a presbytery, whose duty it is to examine into the spiritual state of those congregations, provide preachers, when they are elected of the people set them apart to the work of the ministry by ordination, and afterwards encourage or rebuke, protect or depose them, as may be necessary. It seems to be the province of the presbytery also, to

excommunicate members of the churches who shall grossly offend. The Church of Corinth must have consisted of a number of congregations, for in it were very many believers, and it is expressly said, let your women keep silence in the churches. An individual had brought scandal on the whole church there, by his iniquity, and the apostle (1 Cor. v.) directs the rulers what they should do: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan." That this painful duty was performed by the presbytery is evident from 2 Cor. ii, 6, in which it is said, "This punishment was inflicted of *many*."

In our church, in addition to presbyteries, we have a superior court of jurisdiction, called a synod, in which, the members of the several presbyteries meet, to consult for the common good, under the superintendence and control of Christ alone. I need not here pause to prove that there was a supreme court of Jewish law, called the Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy of the elders, which sat in Jerusalem, and in which, appeals from the inferior courts of the synagogues could be heard. In civil matters, every man is ready to acknowledge the necessity of courts of appeal, and if the interests of the church, and our religious rights are not less important than those which are merely civil, do they not demand a similar protection?

In Scripture the church is described as one body, one army, one kingdom, one house, one wife; she has one head, who is in heaven, one faith, one baptism, one system of laws and ordinances; and is it

not most reasonable, must it not be to the edification of the whole body of Christ, to the well-being of the whole kingdom, to the strength and efficiency of the whole army, that it be not split up into little sections, each irresponsible for its acts, guided by its own views, and caring for its own interests; but that it be under a general council or synod, composed of representatives from each of the parts, whereby the most complete provision is made for the safety, and the peace, and the perfection of the whole; until the time, when her labours being ended and her conquests gained, she shall appear in heaven, under the immediate and personal control of Christ, as the church triumphant? But it may be asked, has her King given, in his word, any authority for such a council? Have we any example of it in apostolic times? Any model by which it may be framed? In reply, I say, take your bibles, and read attentively the 15th chapter of the Acts.

A question arose in the church at Antioch, as to whether Christians were still bound under the yoke of the ceremonial law. The false teachers refused to submit to Paul and the presbytery, and inasmuch as the churches of Syria and Cilicia had also been harassed by them, and this was a question and a controversy likely to affect all the churches, it was resolved, that it should be referred for settlement to an assembly at Jerusalem, which would command universal respect, and from which there would be no appeal.

From the 23rd verse we learn, that this assembly consisted of the "apostles and elders and brethren." By brethren, we understand, not the private members

of the Church of Jerusalem, but representatives from other churches. The names of very few who sat in the assembly are recorded, but of these, two are given in the 22nd verse, and in the 32nd we are expressly told, they were prophets or preachers.¹ In this assembly the apostles did not act as inspired and extraordinary teachers, but simply as elders, and through the whole of this meeting, the other elders seem to have had equal authority with them. Elders were sent from Antioch, as well as apostles. They were sent to the other elders, as well as to the other apostles. In hearing and considering the case—writing the reply—blaming the false teachers—ordaining the decrees, the elders go on from point to point, exercising exactly the same authority as the apostles.

This assembly acted in a deliberative capacity, and decided, not by direct inspiration, but by discussion of the subject. If the apostles had spoken as inspired, it would have been blasphemy for any to have disputed with them, but here there was “*much disputing.*” (verse 7.) One member of the assembly at length proposed a resolution, which was unanimously adopted as its decision on the question. This decision was not a canon, enacted by James as a prelate, or rather indeed as a pope; nor an advice from the private members of the church in Jerusalem, but *an authoritative decree*, binding on all the churches. In the 16th chapter and 4th verse, it is said, “As they went through the cities, they delivered them the *decrees* for to keep, which were *ordained* of the apostles and elders which were at

¹ See Note B.

Jerusalem, and so were the churches established in the faith." The Greek word here translated *decree* is in the New Testament invariably used to signify not a recommendation, but a law or statute, which persons were *bound* to obey.

But it may be asked, why did the Head of the church not inspire one of his servants to declare at once His will in the matter? Why did he, by withholding his Spirit now, render it necessary for his servants to travel up from distant places to discuss this subject? It was evidently for the purpose of setting an example for conducting ecclesiastical or synodical proceedings in all future ages.

But it may be asked again, are synodical decrees to be received as *infallible*? Certainly not. A synod being constituted of men, however wise and grave, yet of like passions with others, may greatly err, and therefore all their decrees are to be examined by the Law and Testimony. But when as in the Synod at Jerusalem, they examine a question by the light of Scripture, and in the decree which they enact, hear and obey the voice of Christ, speaking in his word, then should that decree be felt binding on the consciences of those over whom the court rules, inasmuch as Christ has said, whatever they thus bind on earth, He will bind in heaven. That power which church courts exercise, be it remembered, is not self-assumed—not self-created. It is derived immediately from Christ. He only has a right to make laws and appoint officers in His church; and the authority which they exert is therefore only *ministerial*. That is, as His servants they declare and carry into execution those laws, and those only

which are agreeable to the expressed will of their Master. Like judges on the bench, they have no power either to make new laws, or change the laws already laid down. The Bible is their great code, and whenever they depart from that, they have no claim on your obedience. The force which they employ is not carnal, but moral and spiritual; a force which exerts itself, not in controlling the persons of men, not in inflicting bodily penalties, not in taking possession of their properties, not in giving them over to the civil power, that by its mighty arm they may be crushed; but in warning them of their danger, in rebuking them for their folly, in censuring them for sin, and when they belie their profession, in excluding them from the fellowship of the church. Nor can they exercise even this power over any but those who have voluntarily joined the church, and have in doing so, pledged themselves to submit to its laws.

True, indeed, when our Presbyterian courts are placed in contrast with those over which the prelates rule by delegates, usually called bishops' courts; courts in each of which only a single judge presides without a jury; into which "for his soul's health, and for the lawful correction of his manners and excesses," every man, of whatever sect, may be cited; in which, in its expensive litigation, he may be stripped of his last farthing; by which he may be sent to the dungeon, and under the sentence of which he may stand denuded of all his civil rights:¹ when I say *our* church courts stand in contrast with *these* church courts, they will appear humble and insignificant. Yet inasmuch as we believe, we may expect the presence

¹ See Note C.

of Christ in our courts; *His* sanction for their proceedings; his concurrence in their enactments, and his blessing on their labours; and inasmuch as we desire through them only to address the consciences and advance the spiritual interests of the people committed to our care, we would deeply deplore any change which would destroy their simple and scriptural and spiritual character.

Having thus stated the form of our government, allow me now to advert to some of its advantages.

The first is, that by it the *spiritual independence* of the church is fully secured. Our *fundamental* principle is, that *Christ* is the *alone Head* of the church. Here we acknowledge no pope, we bow to no earthly potentate. When the despots of the Stuart race attempted to invade and usurp this royal prerogative of Messiah,¹ our fathers, though most firmly attached to the sovereign, and most conscientiously and cheerfully obedient to him, in all *civil* matters, here took their stand; and by their struggles in the Assembly, their wanderings on the mountains, their achievements in the battle field, and their sufferings at the stake, they have handed down to us, stained with the blood of many martyrs, this noble birthright of Presbyterians—the *independence* of our church.

Nor are we their sons yet disposed to give it up. It is but a few years since, when the prime minister of the day sent to our Synod the threatening message, that should they proceed to elect a teacher of theology for their youth, they might calculate on the withdrawal of the largest part of their support, the royal

¹ See Note D.

bounty. How was the threat received? Recollecting the deeds of their fathers, and like them, valuing the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, at once they resolved, though it should involve them and their families in deepest penury, to fling the gift to the winds, and assert and act upon their church's independence.

I know it is oft asserted that Presbyterianism fosters the spirit of disloyalty. A grosser calumny has never been invented. If indeed being loyal in spiritual things to Christ constitutes disloyalty in civil things to the magistrate, then we are and ever have been chargeable with this crime. But let it be remembered, we have high authority for the manifestation of this spirit. Christ himself has said, "One is your Master, even Christ." Call no man your father upon earth."

In obedience to this command, when any civil ruler rises up *in the church*, and would claim dominion over the consciences of her members, and assert the possession of a power which the King of kings has not given him, we hold ourselves obliged to protest and refuse obedience. We say to him, as was said to king Uzziah, when he ventured to take a place and perform a duty in the church which God had not authorised, "It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah." And let me tell you not merely how we *should* speak, but how our fathers *did* speak to kings.

"In the reign of James I, deputies from the church of Scotland were admitted to a private audience of the king. They had agreed that James Melville should be their spokesman, on account of the courtousness of his address and the superior degree of

respect which his majesty had uniformly expressed for him. But he had scarcely begun to speak when the king interrupted him, and in a tone of irritation, challenged a meeting held at Cupar as illegal and seditious, and accused him of infusing unreasonable and unfounded fears into the minds of the people. James Melville was preparing to reply in his mild manner, when his uncle (Andrew Melville) unable to restrain himself, or judging that the occasion called for a different style, stepped forward and addressed the king in the following strain, perhaps the most singular in point of freedom that ever saluted royal ears and that ever proceeded from the mouth of a loyal subject, who would have spilt the last drop of his blood in the defence of the person and honour of his prince:—"Sire, we will always humbly reverence your majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your majesty in private, and since you are brought into extreme danger, both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth, and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, sire, as diverse times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland—there is king James, the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the church, whose subject James the VI is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. Sire, those whom Christ has called, and commanded to watch over his church, have power and authority from Him to govern his spiritual kingdom, both

jointly and severally; the which no Christian king or prince should control or discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of his church. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say you are not the head of the church, you cannot give us that eternal life which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it."

But while thus strongly asserting our church's claim to spiritual independence, it may be necessary, to prevent misconceptions, that I shall state somewhat accurately what we believe the civil rulers may do and what they may not do, in relation to ecclesiastical matters. As rulers are subjects to Christ, he being King of kings, so it is their duty to enact only such laws as are agreeable to the dictates of his statute book; to remove from their constitution all impediments to the extension and establishment of his kingdom; to encourage the promulgation of his truth; to protect, and when necessary, make provision for his ministers, that the healing and holy influence of his Gospel may reach to every corner of the land, and promote the well-being and happiness of the people. And here allow me to guard myself by saying, that I am not to be understood as entering on a defence of those *abuses* which may exist, but, as I believe, of an important and scriptural principle.¹

The civil magistrate is the *minister of God for good*; and if a right-hearted man, his object will surely be to secure the greatest possible amount of good to the nation. Searching for the instrumenta-

¹ See Note E.

lity by which this may be accomplished, he finds from the testimony of experience and the word of God, that there is no other machinery so mighty in working out the enlightenment and the elevation, the peace and the prosperity of any people, as those moral means which true religion affords, and which, in these realms, God has placed within his reach.

There are some who aver that kings, as such, have nothing to do with religion. Can you believe it? That God has placed them in a most responsible position, given them a task to perform of immense magnitude and difficulty, revealed the means by the aid of which this work may be most easily and effectually performed, and then sternly say, these means, though they are incomparably the best, these means, though they alone will enable you effectually to accomplish your object, yet of them you shall not be permitted to make the slightest use. This would truly seem as if the design of God in investing magistrates with authority were not the prevention of moral disease, not the promotion of tranquillity and love and joy; but either to tax their ingenuity in working out almost impossibilities, or to afford them ample opportunity of wielding the sword of vengeance over untrained, and therefore guilty culprits. None except infidels will deny that the word of God is mighty and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, none will deny that using that weapon of ethereal temper, ministers of the Gospel—humble, holy, self-denying, apostolic ministers, must exercise a powerful influence through the district around them, in bringing men into a cheerful obedience to righteous law; in subduing selfish and

violent passions; in establishing harmony, in inducing habits of persevering effort, and thus most effectually securing, so far as their labours extend, the best interests, the truest prosperity of the country. When these labours are performed, and when in consequence, all is quietness and order and security, rights respected, property safe, life sacred,¹ owes not the country a debt to the labourers—a debt of *gratitude*—a debt of *justice*? God has laid down in the New Testament the principle, that “the labourer is worthy of his hire;” and there are only two things which can prevent the state from acting on the principle; either *poverty*, which we rejoice she cannot plead, or *dishonesty*, which we hope she will never plead. So long as it is right to pay the police who apprehend, the jailer who restrains, the crown-lawyer who accuses, the judge who condemns, and the officer who executes; it cannot be wrong in the state to protect and support those ministers of Christ’s church, who, by their humble efforts, to a very large amount prevent crime, and save the country from the loss, the enormous pecuniary expense, and the fearful misery attendant on it.

And now, allow me, before quitting this point, to remind you of one or two of the promises which God has made to his church on this subject. In one place, referring to the Gospel period, and speaking of Gentile kings, he says to the church, (Isa. lx, 3—10), “Their kings shall minister unto thee”—and again, Isa. xlix, 22, 23, “I will lift up my hands to the Gentiles; and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers”—and again, Isa. lx,

¹ See Note F.

16, "Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings." If God have thus promised, on behalf of Christian kings, a nursing and protecting provision to the church, it must be right in them to fulfill the promise, and it cannot be wrong in the church to accept that fulfilment.

After thus stating briefly what kings may do, in relation to ecclesiastical matters, allow me to state what they may not do. And here I shall give you the words of our Confession of Faith; "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, *distinct from the civil magistrate.*"

Whatever, then, the king may do *for* our church, he can do nothing, as king, *within* our church. "In things ecclesiastical, (says the illustrious and eloquent Chalmers,) *we* decide all. Some of these things may be done wrong, still they are our majorities which do it. They are not, they cannot be forced upon us from without. We own no head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is done ecclesiastically is done by our ministers, acting in his name, and in perfect submission to his authority. The magistrate may withdraw his protection, and our church cease to be established any longer, but in all the high matters of sacred and spiritual jurisdiction she would be the same as before. With or without an establishment, she, in these, is the unfettered mistress of her doings. The king by himself, or his representative, might be the *spectator* of our pro-

ceedings; but what Lord Chatham said of the poor man's house, is true in all its parts of the church to which I have the honour to belong. "In England every man's house is his castle, not that it is surrounded by walls and battlements; it may be a straw-built shed; every wind of heaven may whistle round it; every element of heaven may enter it; but the king cannot, the king dare not."

Influenced as we unanimously and decidedly are by such views, it should not excite surprise, that though branded publicly, and that within the last few weeks, with being "*Schismatics of the worst class*," because we enter not the pale of the English church, we yet regard but lightly the term of reproach which is put on us.¹

Had we no other objection against entering that church, had she given up her prelates, and simplified her forms, till she stood forth in the garb of our scriptural Presbyterianism, still, as she has parted her liberty, submitted to be manacled and managed as a king or queen may command, and asserts not, even under the most grievous and galling oppression, her claims to independence, we cannot, we dare not unite with her. Many things about her we admire, —many of her devoted and zealous sons we love; but when we see them writhing under the painful impression that Popery is again taking its seat in her high places; when we see their ship steering in a wrong course, while they who have both tact and energy to guide her right are bolted down in the hold, under laws and canons, and those are at the helm in whom they themselves have no confidence,

¹ See Note G.

can they wonder that we say, we cannot enter that vessel with you? Within our own good ship, trimmed, and ready as she is for the coming storm, we think us safer, happier, freer, and shall not seek to change.

But it may be necessary that I should state more at length the grounds of our objection against wiping off this awful charge of *schism* by entering the English church.

One ground of objection is the law by which the king or queen of England is made the *visible head* of the church. I am aware, it is said by some Episcopalians, that the queen has power, not over the spiritual, but only over the temporal or secular affairs of the church. I might refer here for proof of the untenableness of this defence to many acts of parliament, and to the articles and canons of the church;¹ but to spare your time, I shall at present pass over these, and remind you of a few facts with which many of you are familiar.

In the reign of Anne, the convocation of the clergy found Whiston guilty, as they say, of "several damnable and blasphemous assertions against the doctrine and worship of the ever-blessed Trinity." Before they could depose him, they must obtain the queen's authority. She seems not to have approved of their faithfulness, and quashed the proceedings.² This was one of the last acts of the Convocation, for, since that time, the clergy have never been allowed to hold an assembly. Every year it is opened, as if but to remind them of their slavery, and then imme-

¹ See Note H.

² See Bishop Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. iv, p. 369.

diately dissolved. O! for the church's sake, for the truth's sake, for Christ's sake, I would that a convocation were allowed to meet in London but for even a few years. I would that such men as Edward Nangle of Achill, fearless and faithful men—and I rejoice to say the church has many such—were permitted their rightful privilege of taking their place in a free assembly. Soon would they counter-work the abettors of Popery now within their church. Soon would they erect a battery, by which they would level to the dust, all the hopes of the pope, that England is soon again to be his own. Soon would they effect, what our fathers did, under somewhat similar circumstances, in Scotland—*a second Reformation*.

But of this there is no hope, for though allowed to meet, they could enact no decree without the queen's leave, and when decreed, they could not promulgate it without her authority.¹ Sincerely and deeply do I grieve for this. But they may ask, what would you do, if placed in the same position? It becomes me not to say what we would do, lest I should appear to boast, but I point to what our fathers did exactly 200 years ago, when, in defiance of the king's command, and with the prospect of dungeons and death before them, they sat in the Assembly of 1638, and asserted and achieved their church's independence.

We have lately been invited to go round the bulwarks of England's Zion.² Our guide first deprecates with becoming warmth the impropriety of two English *Independents*, James and Palmer, (the latter of

¹ See Note I.

² "Sermons on the Church," by A. Boyd, A.M.

whom is long since dead,) pointing out what they looked on, as cracks and crevices in the foundations of the fortress. A Belfast bookseller, fifteen years ago, tacked to a catechism by this Palmer, some statements, in which he introduced the name of the Synod of Ulster, *without her authority*, to puff it off, and put cash into his pocket, and now when it had passed away, our friend must raise it from the grave to give it another blow, and make it the occasion for waking up a painful controversy between us. However, as from his high watch-tower, he invites us to go with him round the citadel, we cannot well refuse. With a tact which we greatly admire, he points us to her gorgeous palaces, her noble domes, her gilded minarets, and thus would keep those who are within, and also allure us to enter. But ere we have had time to gaze on all this magnificence and beauty, another, and another, and another watchman peals a loud alarm from within. On the north side, the keeper would persuade us all is safe; but from a tower a little farther south, men equally faithful, and equally lovers of their church, proclaim all is in danger. At a meeting of the clergy of the diocese of Ardagh, specially convened on the 10th Dec., 1838, it was, among other things, unanimously resolved—"That we cannot but view with extreme sorrow the progress of certain opinions which have emanated from a few divines in Oxford, and which, it is to be feared, have found some advocates in this country also, tending to overthrow the fundamental grounds of the protest, in the 16th century, by the blessed reformers, against the apostacy of the Church of Rome."

"That we have met as a diocese to record these

our unanimous and deliberate opinions, in the hope that our brethren generally may see fit to adopt the same course, and endeavour, by sounding the alarm, under Divine blessing, to arrest the progress of an evil, which is threatening fatal consequences to the purity of our reformed faith, and wounding our church insidiously and dangerously in the house of her professed friends.¹ And whence this cry of danger?

“Do traitors lurk in the Christian hold?”

They do!—they do! Ay, and they too hear the shout of *treason* raised against them, but they laugh the faithful men to scorn, knowing that long since their fathers surrendered the keys of the fortress to one without it, over whom they have now no control;—knowing that these men’s hands are tied behind their backs, and except they proclaim their danger, and pray to their God, they can do nothing. We would not fear for them, had these true soldiers of the cross the power to hunt from their gates, or fling from their ramparts, the treacherous foe, who, having gained admission, is now, they assert, endeavouring insidiously to undermine and destroy the very foundations of their church. A traitor may rise up in any church. There was one among the twelve apostles. But, a few years since, there were some Arians and Socinians, who, by concealing their opinions, had crept into our camp, and our congregations. Where was our safety then? In this, that so soon as they avowed themselves, every man in our church had full opportunity of dragging them before our courts; and such in point of fact were the energetic measures

¹ See Note K.

employed against them, that they fled in ill sustained disguise,—calling themselves *Remonstrants*. The same power retained by our mother church through many bitter and bloody contendings with those monarchs who would usurp her keys also, and man her towers with apostates, has saved her oft in time of danger. Not even the high attainments—the noble bearing—the devoted piety—the splendid eloquence;—eloquence, by which, as if by magic, he kept oft enchained in the Scots' church, Regent's-square, the highest nobles and statesmen of the day, could save Edward Irving, when he betrayed the trust committed to him by the Church of Scotland. And should any man within her pale dare to broach Popery, would she be in danger? Not the slightest! Would her watchmen meet merely to proclaim their terror? No! In whatever part of the church he rise up to inculcate such doctrines, his presbytery would at once strip him of his office, and drive him beyond the range of her spiritual territory, degraded and powerless!

Another ground of our objection against freeing ourselves of the charge of schism, by entering the English Church, is *the power claimed and acted on by the government of the country;—a government composed of Infidels, Quakers, Romanists, Independants, Prelatists, and Presbyterians, to determine how many bishops and rectors she should possess.* If but a few years ago they cut off ten of her Irish bishops, I see no reason why, if they choose, they may not cut them all off.¹ If they could remove the clergy from a very large number of parishes, as was threatened by fierce debates on the subject,

¹ See Note L.

two years ago, in the House of Commons, I see no reason, if a few more enemies to religion find their way into parliament, why they may not order all the parish churches to be closed ;—a calamity alike to the Protestantism and the prosperity of this country ;—a calamity for which I would weep the bitterest tears, and against which, I most solemnly declare I would offer up to God my most earnest prayers.

Did the parliament or the queen lay a finger on one of our congregations, and say, you shall have no pastor there, we would reply, we planted one there by the authority of Christ, without your leave, and we shall keep one there despite your command. Within the last year the spirit of Scotland's Kirk has been tested again on this very point. One of her parishes had become vacant ; the people, in accordance with the freedom which they enjoy, chose a pastor. On certain grounds the civil power forbade his induction ; the case was referred to the Assembly ; they at once ordered the presbytery to go on with the ordination, and with the threat of fines and imprisonment held over them, they nobly did their duty, and again asserted their church's independence.

The Rev. Mr. Guthrie, speaking on this case, in Edinburgh, said—“ You may imprison our ministers, we will submit to that—you may spoil us of our goods, we will submit to that—you may abolish our establishment if you can, and we will submit to that ; but we will not submit that you pull down the banner that we have set up, *with the freedom of the people emblazoned upon it.* Talk of prisons to cowards and traitors ; talk of prisons to women and children ; talk of a prison to some hungry preacher, who seeks the

priest's office for a bit of bread ; but talk not of prisons to men, in whose veins flows the blood of the covenants ;—the heads of whose fathers rolled on the bloody scaffold, and bleached above your city gates for many a long year and day. We have taken a colour, we have blazoned on it, *the rights of the Christian people*, we have nailed and clenched it to our very mast head, and there at this moment it flies ; and if God, in his providence, sees meet that the church—the Ark of Scotland—shall sink below the waters, then we shall go down before the storm, and down into the deep ; but the last thing that the world shall see of the Church of Scotland, shall be the blue banner of the covenant, as it dips into the wave.”

Another ground of our objection against freeing ourselves of the charge of schism, by entering the English church, is *the absolute power vested in the queen or her minister to appoint the dignitaries of the church—the archbishops and bishops*.¹ These, again, appoint the inferior clergy ; now, suppose a time might come when the queen's adviser would be a man utterly unsound in the faith ;—one of those trained in the Jesuitism of the Oxford school, might we not most certainly expect to see each diocese, as it became vacant, filled up with Oxford men ; and these, again, as each parish required a new pastor, giving to it a priest in disguise. What is there improbable in this ? What is there now to prevent it ? O ! if such were given, the people would not receive them. The people ! Why, the people are never consulted—they have no voice in the matter, but must just re-

¹ See Note M.

ceive without a question or a murmur the prelate and the priest thrust upon them. I grant that the prayers of her sainted ministers and her sainted members may prevent it; but with the most melancholy feelings I state it, that there is nothing in the constitution of the church to save her. From the fountainhead of her power there may an evil influence, a deadly virus, which none save God can neutralize, be sent down along the whole stream of her primates and prelates and pastors, till her people, drinking in the poison, may be prepared to go back into all the abominations of apostate Rome.¹

Having before mentioned some of the advantages of our government, in which all, both ministers and members, partake indiscriminately, allow me now to return to this point, and to state some which the *people* possess; and some which the *rulers* enjoy.

The first great advantage to the people is, that they have the *choice* of their own rulers. No man, however wise, or learned, or influential, can usurp authority over them. If he come to sit officially in their church courts, it must be through the door of their own election. It has been shown before, in the course of these lectures, and I need not therefore pause to prove, that Christ has given the people this privilege. The right is an invaluable one, and in civil matters, now held through every land, where despotism tramples not under its iron heel all the best interests of man, to be the very keystone of the people's freedom.

But it is said the election of officers in the Presbyterian churches engenders a bitter spirit, and

¹ See Note N.

creates much confusion. Now I readily grant that instances may be found in which people have abused their privilege; but I ask, may not every other blessing be abused? Have we not all often abused many of the best blessings of God's providence and grace? And if he were deny us these, lest we should abuse them, I ask, what blessings would we retain? Instances of abuse may be found, but I hesitate not to say, it is truly amazing that in the evangelical Presbyterian churches of this country, consisting of about 500 congregations, and enjoying such perfect freedom, these instances should be so rare. Let me ask, would the people of Great Britain for such reasons submit to a deprivation of their right of electing persons to fill civil offices? Suppose that some of the aristocracy of the land, looking down with pity on the people because of their ignorance, and therefore unfitness to choose their representatives; or, with lengthened visage and melancholy tone, deploring the disturbance and confusion which take place at our city and country elections, should propose to rid them of all this sad inconvenience which they suffer, by doing away with our free government, and establishing an oligarchy; assuring them that these few nobility will govern the country quite as well, if not much better, than the many whom they send forward to fill the commons' house of parliament. Suppose such a proposal made, the men who make it would be esteemed only fit for a lunatic asylum; and if they dared attempt to effect it, the people of the land would arise, and send forth such a shout of vengeance as would terrify the boldest tyrant. And if we feel so sensitively regarding our civil liberty, why should we allow any oligarchy, no

matter how talented and learned they may chance to be, to rob us of rights far more valuable; rights and liberties, not merely connected with our own and our children's well-being in time, but through the endless ages of eternity?

On this subject the highly-gifted author of "The Natural History of Enthusiasm," himself a member of the English church, says, "The necessary restoration to her just prerogatives, the church will not expect to receive, nor should she desire it, without at the same time admitting that *due leaven of popular influence, without which, in fact, there cannot be vitality in any church*; and apart from which church power will never be any thing else but *a spiritual despotism.*" "Unless there were room to hope for a correction and reform of political prelacy, an honest and modest Christian *would take refuge in the substantial benefits of Presbyterianism.*"

But it is said we are *Democrats*. Our whole history belies the charge. Presbyterians have ever been the unflinching advocates of monarchy, united with a representative government. True they are often taunted with the death of Charles; but most unjustly. There was only one Presbyterian in the house of commons when he was condemned, and fifty-seven Presbyterian ministers in London protested against the taking away of his life; and bishop Burnet says, "The Presbyterians were much against it, and were every where fasting and praying for the king's preservation." The usurper who put him to death they unceasingly resisted, and were the first to make a vigorous and successful effort to bring back the second, and to them, most ungrateful Charles.

But it is said you are democrats in the government of the church. We scout the principle. We say it is a most absurd thing to bring the whole members of a community, wise and foolish, calm and passionate, orderly and disorderly, educated and ignorant, men and women, to enact laws, and exercise rule, and decide in difficulties, and perform all the functions of a regular and well-ordered government. On the contrary, our system most perfectly provides for what all free men in civilized society have long adopted as the basis of an efficient government—the selection of the wise and the good and the grave, by the voice of the people, to form their laws and exercise authority over them. And that this is the system of which Christ approves is evident from the fact, that while he gives the Christian people the choice of the church officers, he at the same time distinctly commands, “Obey them that have the rule over you.”

Another advantage which the Presbyterian people enjoy, and one immediately springing from the former is *trial by jury*. If our church sessions are formed on this principle, no right-minded man, no man who knows what true liberty means, can refuse to submit to their decision. He is not brought to take his stand, and plead his cause before a despot, from whom he has no appeal; but he stands like a British freeman, to plead before a jury of his peers. No minister of our church dare attempt of himself a judicial act of discipline. He may entreat, he may warn, he may, when these avail not to keep back the offender from ordinances, lay the case for judgment before the session, or if there be no session yet

formed, before the presbytery; but of himself alone he can do nothing more. Nor ought the members of a church ever to give up their rights and privileges into the hand of a single man, to be treated by him as his favouritism on the one hand, or prejudice on the other might dictate.

Another advantage to the people, and one of great value, is *their right of appeal* to a higher court in any case in which they may suppose themselves aggrieved by the decision of the Session. We have no wish to conceal, that however admirably arranged may be the form of government by sessions, and however wise and well-selected the elders, inasmuch as they are men, they are necessarily liable to have their judgment sometimes warped by passion or prejudice; and may therefore give a most unrighteous judgment, and do the subject of their sentence gross injustice. But in our church there is such a remedy, as the civil law provides for those injured by law—the power of appeal; an appeal to a court composed of men strangers to him and to his cause; in which none of those who have condemned him will be allowed to take a part; in which, it is as impossible as any arrangements among men can effect, that he shall be partially dealt with. But if he should, he has at once, and without expense, another appeal to the highest court, in which are the representatives of the whole church assembled; and where no petty and local prejudices can affect him.

The Presbyterian church thus combines and secures to you these three great advantages, the *choice of your rulers*; the *trial by jury*; the *appeal from oppression*.

But whilst the Presbyterian church thus possesses that form of government which gives the *people* the highest amount of privilege, it does the same to the *pastor*. In the English church, the presbyters do not rule, but are ruled; while in Scripture the Holy Spirit invariably speaks of *all* the elders having oversight and rule. But the Church of England presbyter has no authority whatever to exercise discipline in the church.¹

True he may summon a man to the bishops' court, but he has no voice there; and in bringing the man before it, he only does what any other person may do. In notes appended to Sermons on "The Church," the writer says, that "in the rubric, before service, the church claims the right of forbidding the approach of notoriously evil livers;" "that characters whom the church pronounces unfit to come to the Lord's table are warned not to appear there;" that her ministers may give "frequent and faithful addresses on the subject from the pulpit;" "*after this the matter lies between them and their God.*" "We content ourselves with telling communicants what they should be, and commanding them to examine themselves whether they are so, and *to act upon their convictions.*" Then to relieve his church, he tries to show how difficult it is to draw the line of distinction between the converted and the unconverted man. But we would at once save all the trouble of this argument by supposing not such a case, but that of a man coming forward, who, though he can repeat the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and the creed, is yet grossly ignorant,

¹ See Note O.

so that he cannot discern the Lord's body, and must therefore eat and drink judgment to himself; who has through his whole life been a "*notoriously evil liver.*" Suppose he come forward, and though entreated in private, and warned from the rubric in public, yet takes his place at the altar, and insists upon a holy minister, who shrinks from coming into any contact with such a man, dispensing to him those emblems which were given only for the disciples of Christ; is the minister of God obliged, is the minister of the church of England obliged to address him as a child of God, and say to him, "Dearly beloved in the Lord," at the very time when he has every reason to believe him a child of the devil? Is he obliged to give to such a wretch the memorials of a Saviour's love and death, and thus to be a partaker in trampling under foot the blood of Christ, in desecrating and prostituting the ordinance of Him who commissioned him in the New Testament not only to preach, but to *rule* in the church? O! if he be so obliged what a ——— but I pause.¹

It may, however, be asked me, have you *never* dispensed the sacrament to unworthy persons? And if you have, does not this place you and your church on the same footing with the other? I answer, it affects not the question, whether *I* have acted faithfully or unfaithfully by my master's commission and my own duty: but the question is, when such a person comes forward, and I know his character to be vile and unworthy, must I "content myself with telling him what he should be," and directing him "to examine himself," allow him thus "to *act* upon *his*

¹ See Note P.

convictions ;” leaving “*the matter between him and his God*” ? Am I obliged, does my church oblige me, does the law of the land oblige me, to trample on the law of Christ ? He commands me, in a language as peremptory as that in any of his laws, not merely to “address” and “warn,” but to “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and *have no company with him.*” “*Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*” If the statutes of parliament ordered me to violate these laws of heaven, I hope I would have grace given me, like the apostles, to obey God rather than man. If my church, after my arguing, and remonstrating, and protesting against it, would still insist that I must obey her rather than her Lord, I have no hesitation in saying, I would infinitely rather follow the example of the non-conformists of England, of whom, in one day 2000 were turned out from their churches, homeless and penniless, than load my conscience with sin. But the law of the land interferes not with me ; my own church, so far from commanding, forbids me ; and in that liberty which I enjoy, from the sore oppression, of being not only robbed of the authority which Christ gave me when he made me a minister, but of being forced to serve out the children’s bread to the open and notorious enemies of my Lord ; I do greatly rejoice, and will let no man take my crown.

But the writer of these sermons says, and is evidently much pleased with the expression, The church “endorses no man’s pretensions.” Neither, I add, does the Presbyterian church. She examines an

individual before admitting him into her communion ; but it is not to try *his heart* ; it is not to judge and pronounce on the *reality* of his repentance and faith : it is to see that he make such a profession of his faith in the doctrines of the Gospel and obedience to Christ, as in the judgment of charity is a *credible* one. The Presbyterian church judges not of the “ inward spiritual condition ” of any man ; but she judges whether he make a *credible profession*. In “ retaining ” and “ remitting ” offences, the Presbyterian church does not dare to take God’s place, who alone can forgive sins ; but simply pronounces her censures upon the scandalous offender ; and on his making a credible profession of repentance, she remits the censures or punishments which *she* had lain on. She “ endorses no man’s pretensions.” This is also declared of the Church of England, yet there are, as it appears to me, *three* distinct occasions on which she endorses men’s pretensions ; and often on *two* of these, without any evidence whatever authorising her.

Christ gave not to the apostles, and the word of God gives not to us, an authority to baptize the child of heathens till at least one of the parents make a credible profession. Now there comes to the Church of England a man who has banished his lawful wife, is living in adultery, and is therefore worse than a heathen, a man who has never been in communion with the Church of England, and who is flying from the ¹ discipline of his own church. Such a man comes and presents the offspring of his adultery, while some two other persons take on them awful

¹ See Note Q.

vows which they cannot perform, and the minister is obliged at once to baptize it. He then endorses the pretensions of the child by saying, "that this child is regenerated," and again by saying, "we yield thee most hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it *hath* pleased thee to *regenerate* this infant with thy *Holy Spirit.*" And so effectual is this endorsing, that as soon as capable of committing any thing to memory, the child is taught by his minister to say, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Truly, if this is not *endorsing pretensions*, I know not what is.

Again: A man becomes unwell—the terror of death is upon him—he sends for the minister of the English church. He is directed first to pray, then exhort, then ask the man if he believe the several clauses of the creed, then "examine if the man *truly repent* and be *in charity* with all the world," then exhort again, then move him to make a special confession of his sins if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, then, if it be "humbly and heartily desired," he shall absolve him in these words, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve *all* sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences, and by his authority committed to me, *I absolve thee from all thy sins*, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

I ask, is not this an examination of the *reality* of the dying man's repentance? Is it not in the strongest possible form an *endorsing of his pretensions*?

But again : After the death of the most abandoned sinner, what is said over his grave ? It hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy, *to take unto himself the soul* of our dear brother here departed.”

Thus, without at all discussing the propriety of these formularies, some of which in the subsequent discourse will be more fully considered, we see that at a man's *birth, death, and burial*, does the Church of England endorse his pretensions. Greatly do I rejoice that I am never obliged so to endorse *any* man's pretensions.¹

Another advantage enjoyed by our ministers is one which springs from the guaranteed right of the people to elect their own pastor. A young man of high talent, after an expensive education and long and severe study, comes to be licensed to preach the Gospel. If an acceptable and useful preacher, he is soon comfortably located ; and is not kept hanging for years on the smile of a prelate, till his heart, sick with “hope deferred,” sinks within him ; and his noble and generous spirit is broken by seeing those around him whom he loves as himself pining away in penury, he being obliged to maintain the appearance of a gentleman, whilst his income many of our working mechanics would think exceedingly pitiful.² And all this too whilst another, perhaps his inferior in every thing which constitutes a great man and a good minister, lives beside him in all the pomp of baronial splendour.

With us the question of Christian parents, when about to dedicate their child to the ministry, is

¹ See Note R.

² See Note S.

not,—What influence do we possess? how can we bring it to bear on those who have livings to bestow? But the question is,—Has God given to our son the talents and the grace which will fit him to be a useful minister? And if they can answer this question satisfactorily, they have no fears for the result; assured, that while the freedom of election secures the rights of the people, it will also secure to each minister the place and the position in the church which he is fitted to occupy.

The only other advantage to which I shall refer as belonging to the ruler, is the freedom he enjoys of bearing his testimony in the church's Assembly *for* all that is good and *against* all that is evil. I have already adverted to this so prominently, that I shall only detain you to notice an objection which I doubt not you have often heard against our synod's debates. They are stigmatised as noisy, unchristian, and turbulent; and you hear some one, who never enjoyed the privilege, as a ruler of the church, of opening his mouth on a free platform, deeply *sympathising* with us, and mourning grievously that Christian ministers should exhibit such a spectacle of contention. Had such persons been near James when he sat, as they say, in the episcopal chair of the synod at Jerusalem, what a grave lecture they would have whispered in his ear for presiding over an assembly of Christian men in which there was "much disputing"?

I believe that within these walls¹ many of you heard the most spirit-stirring debate we have had for

¹ This discourse was preached in the first Presbyterian church of Derry.

many years. I have heard from you since, that you thought not the less of your church, though you heard that day “much disputing,” that you thought not the less of your ministers and elders, because of the firmness with which they held their views and the freedom and the fearlessness with which they spake them. And I hope there never shall come a time when, in place of that spirit, there shall creep over our church’s assembly “the calm of the dead sea.” Oft again we may have long debates—and I trust no power shall arise to crush our liberty. Oft these may prove loud and stormy. Let them—let us have any thing—even the very “shout of freemen,” rather than the stillness which reigns beneath “spiritual despotism.”

But the church of Christ has other work to do than merely take care of those within her pale. She is set up in the earth to send the Gospel to the heathen. When any churches attempt this work, they are absolutely obliged to become Presbyterian. When Episcopalians commence missionary operations, and most faithfully are they labouring in the work, they find they must have congregational or association committees, answering to our church sessions; they must have enlarged or county associations, combining and concentrating the smaller ones, answering to our presbytery; they must have their general meeting of delegates, by whose authority all the proceedings and labours of the mission are conducted, exactly answering to our Synod. It may be said that the bishop or archbishop presides at the meeting, and thus do we acknowledge his superiority. Yes; but though he presides, and I grant

it is an high honour, yet he is there only *primus inter pares*, the first among his equals. Every member's vote there is as good as his : Nay, in truth, he has no vote unless it come to a casting one ; and nothing is decided by his dictate. He is simply the *moderator of the General Assembly of his church met for missionary purposes.*

Thus, in whatever point of view we examine our church, to whatever duty she is called, she has the very best machinery which can be devised ; the best for accomplishing the work she has to do at home ; the best for carrying out, and carrying on the work to be done abroad ; the best under all variety of circumstances ; the best for every age, and every country.

We have now, I confess, unwillingly on our part, been forced to the examination of our system by statements which do not condescend to notice the evils connected with it, for then we might have profited by them, but which annihilate at once our existence as a church of Christ ; statements so strong, that had we sat silent any longer, it must have been supposed either that we thought them true and could not controvert them ; or that we cared not for our church and our principles ; or that we blanched before the wield of the prelatist's arm, and dared not meet him on the field of argument. Thus pressed to the examination of our church's government, we have tried it in the balance of Scripture, and it has not been found wanting. We have tested it by placing it along side the free institutions of our country, and we have found that it is exactly the form of government which in civil things free men every where adopt.

We have found, in truth, that it is the *only perfect form* of church discipline, the only form which brings *all* the people and *all* the ministers, the *humblest* member and the *highest* ruler under a free government, and yet an effective control.

In conclusion: I must say, that I do not think the subject of church government is sufficiently studied by Presbyterians of the present day. I would not have any man to be a Presbyterian because his father was one; but because he knows that Presbyterianism is the system laid down in the Bible. There has been a very general tendency latterly to adopt the strange opinion, that it matters very little, what form of government we are under. Men wrapping themselves up in their selfishness, are quite satisfied if they themselves hear a Gospel minister preach each Sabbath; not respecting in the slightest, how the system under which they sit robs Christ of his crown and his authority in Zion: not regarding how the form of government to which they submit tramples on the rights and liberties of others.

I do believe the time is not far distant, when we shall be forced to take our stand, as were our fathers, against a papal, or semi-papal prelatic tyranny; and I would that you should be like your fathers, prepared to "withstand in the evil day." At a former period of our history, so well acquainted were all the people with the subject of church government, that the very peasantry of Scotland confounded the curates who were forced upon them.¹

And let it not be said, that being well instructed in the lessons of the Bible, on this or any other to-

¹ See Note T.

pic, will make men morose and bigoted. It will indeed prepare men, when it may be necessary, for contending earnestly for the faith delivered to the saints; but it will also prepare them, knowing what liberty is, and rejoicing in it, to give most cheerfully to those who differ from them, the liberty of doing so. I have invariably found amongst all sects, the most ignorant man to be the most bigoted man. And if there be bigotry in Presbyterians, if there be any narrow-minded enmity towards the adherents to other sects, I am persuaded it will be found in those members of our church who know least of their own system.

In this discourse, I have spoken much of church government; but I have spoken only of the *machine*. I have not intended to cast the slightest personal reflection on any man; and if I have sometimes been obliged, in order to call things by their right names, to use such words as *usurping* and *despotic*; words which may seem severe, I beg leave to say, I spake them only as implying, that the system supplies ample opportunity, for those who choose to adopt and execute measures, either *oppressive* of the church on the one hand, or *destructive* of it on the other.

If any thing I have said be felt severe, I am conscious this must arise from the melancholy fact that, my statements are but too true; and deeply anxious as I am for the conservation of the all-important and life-giving doctrines, which we hold in common; these statements I could not withhold, being most fully persuaded that unless the members and the ministers of the English church soon arise from

their long and placid slumbers, to the work of a *thorough reformation*—unless they soon make a vigorous and united effort, not merely to “walk about their Zion,” and point out to us its perfection and its splendour, but to take their fortress out of the hands of those who control all her appointments, and all her officers, they who hate her will soon possess her; and banishing from her gates the faithful heroes who would still cling to her, and struggle for her spiritual existence, will turn her guns on them and us alike, and, with tremendous power, use her resources and her revenues to drive *evangelical Protestantism* of whatever name from the land.

In the present state of things in this country, I must say, that I think there is much more important work to be done, by the ministers of the Establishment, and on which their time and labour might be much more wisely expended, than in making attacks on a sister Protestant church, growing beside them since the Reformation; a church, by which if deserted, and opposed in their present difficulties, they could no longer resist the desolating torrent which had set in against them.

Yet I must also say, that by these attacks on the church which I love, I do not feel, in the least, *personally* offended, because I doubt not they were made most conscientiously; made, not to insult, but to convince, and I trust that in this you feel as I do; and that our statements will be met in a similar spirit, by our friends, on whose system we have commented.

In the last place, let me remind you, that if as Presbyterians, you have greater advantages than

others, then are you necessarily under deeper obligations. It will, in the "great day of God Almighty," avail you nothing, nay it will add to your condemnation, to have it declared of you, that you lived under the most perfect form of church government, but that you lived glorying only in this form, and had never sought that power of grace and godliness, which Christ has declared absolutely necessary; that you had lived your whole life, partaking of the benefits of a government, and yet against its King and Head you had never in your *hearts* ceased to be rebels! Professing, each Sabbath, to be loyal subjects, and yet as seen by him who searches the inner man, to be his decided and determined enemies. If there be differences of judgment in the day of trial, as there will, if there be a deeper and more damning sentence passed on one than on another—as there will, it must be on *you*, the unconverted and ungodly Presbyterian. O then trust not in your system, but in your Saviour; boast not of your forms, but rejoice in the Lord; glory not in your name, but in this, that you are indeed and in truth—that you are spiritually and really the freemen of Christ. And use the liberty wherewith he makes you free, and the institutions he has given you to advance his kingdom and promote his glory.

NOTES TO DISCOURSE III.

NOTE A, p. 139.

THE Rev. H. Melville of Camberwell, London, perhaps the most celebrated preacher at present in the Church of England, says, in a sermon preached February, 1834, that “no form of church government is clearly laid down in the New Testament, and that therefore *we cannot claim for our own* the express sanction of Divinity.”

NOTE B, p. 157.

“In verse 12th, this assembly is called “all the multitude,” *παν το πληθος*. This was not the whole mass of Christians. Let the historian Luke explain his own phrase. The (*παν το πληθος*) “whole multitude” led Jesus to Pilate, Luke, xxiii, 1. Matthew tells us, chapter xxvii, 1, 2, that this whole multitude was the chief priests and the elders of the people—that is, the Jewish Sanhedrim, the supreme council of Judea. Nay, Mark, chapter xv, 1, expressly says it was the Sanhedrim, the whole council, *ολον το συνεδριον*. Since, consequently, this name, *παν το πληθος* was given to the supreme council of the Jews, it is not difficult to ascertain its meaning in relation to a Christian representative assembly. The Christian *παν το πληθος* is the general synod, the *ολη τη εκκλησια*, verse 22. There is not a class of persons distinct from the apostles and elders held up to our view in this verse. It only informs us that the apostles and elders acted in a collective capacity, and that the enacting assembly was a proper representation of the whole church. Indeed the whole church could not possibly, otherwise than by representation, be present at Jerusalem.”—M^cLeod, page 137.

NOTE C, p. 159.

"I never yet," says Lord Clarendon in his History, vol. i, page 244, "spoke with one clergyman who hath made the experience of both litigations, that hath not ingenuously confessed, he had rather, in respect of his *trouble, charge,* and satisfaction, to his understanding, have three suits depending in Westminster Hall, than one in the Arches, or any ecclesiastical court."

Bishop Burnet, in his Preface to the History of the Reformation, says, "Our ecclesiastical courts are not in the hands of our bishops and their clergy, but put over to the civilians, where too often fees are more strictly looked after than the correction of manners. Excommunication has become a kind of secular sentence, and is hardly now considered as a spiritual censure, being judged and given out by laymen, and often upon grounds which, to speak moderately, do not merit so severe and dreadful a sentence."

As a modern example of the wise decisions of these courts, we refer to the late deliverance in the Arches, London, in the case of Breeks, *v.* Woolfrey, in which the judge pronounced that praying for the dead is not contrary to the laws of the Church of England.

"House of Commons, Tuesday, February, 21, 1839.

"W. Barron, a *Roman Catholic*, moved for leave to bring in a bill for reforming the *ecclesiastical* courts of Ireland." Thus is the Church of England directed and controlled in her *very discipline* by *Roman Catholics*.

NOTE D, p. 160.

By the Book of Canons prepared for the Church of Scotland by the English Bishops, the royal supremacy was rendered absolute and unlimited. No assembly of the clergy could be summoned but by the king; and the ordained clergy were forbidden to hold any private meetings even for expounding the Scriptures. Communicants were *compelled* to receive the sacrament kneeling, and *private confession* and *absolution* were *enjoined*. Benedictions were to be offered to *the dead*; a number of Scottish departed

saints were to be enshrined in the English calendar; lessons from the Apocrypha were to be read along with the prayers; and at the sacrament the Presbyterian ministers were to stand like priests, with their back to the communion table and their arms lifted up as if in adoration of the communion elements, after the Romish fashion of adoring the wafer. The historian, Baillie, says of the ministers, we were not permitted to treat any thing, but to take the king's writ for our full and satisfactory conclusion in all things. This law, asserting the king's supremacy over the Church of Scotland, was rescinded by the first Act of the second Session of Parliament after the Revolution; and it was also admitted and enacted by Parliament in 1690, that to the General Assembly belongs the power to superintend the other church courts, reform evils in the government of the church, and "redress all other church disorders."

NOTE E, p. 163.

By the Census of 1834, the members of the established church of Ireland amounted to 852,064. The Presbyterians to 642,355. In this the Presbyterians were shamefully underrated, and to whatever extent, our loss was added to the episcopal column. In *one town*, by the candid confession of the Rector, we were wronged to the amount of 500 individuals. In 1835, the Synod appointed a committee to examine the official return. They reported the amount of the Presbyterian population as "underrated," and say, they "wish especially to call the attention of the synod to the fact, that in *very many* of those congregations, where the pastoral charge of the minister extends over more parishes than one, the minister did not receive notice of the commissioner's visit to each of those parishes, although their names had been returned by him to the secretary of the commission in Dublin, an omission which deprived him of any opportunity of inspecting the returns of the population for any of his parishes save the one in which his place of worship happened to be situated. In other parishes where casual vacancies had occurred from the death or removal of ministers, the Presbyterian population has, in one at least, been *altogether*, and in others, partially overlooked; while in several parishes the Presbyterian places of worship have been *entirely omitted*."

We are now fully persuaded, that were the churches fairly balanced, the number of Presbyterians in Ireland and of Episcopalians would be very nearly equal. Sir Robert Peel maintained in Parliament the revenues of the Established Church did not amount to more than *L.*450,000, while others rated them at twice that sum. Taking them at the medium, between the two extreme calculations, we may perhaps state them at *L.*600,000. This is paid the episcopal church for watching over about 700,000 souls, whilst, for attending to the same number, the Presbyterian churches receive about *L.*30,000. There can be no doubt that these large revenues were *originally* given the English clergy, not merely for the sake of the few English settlers who were scattered over the country, but that, labouring as *devoted missionaries*, they might enlighten and bless all the inhabitants of the land. The Fortieth Canon for the Irish Church says, "Every minister, having any Popish recusant or recusants in his parish, shall *labour diligently with them* from time to time, thereby to reclaim them from their errors." We know no wiser, nobler purpose for which the money could have been given; but to a sense of the shameful neglect of the trust committed to her, we fear the English Church will be only awaked by the "fiery trial" which seems before her, and awaked when it will be too late.

Most firmly do we hold the principle as both scriptural and reasonable, that the state should provide, when necessary, for the moral and religious instruction of the people; but we apprehend that the abuses which have been connected with that principle, have gone far to make it hateful to many who look at it only through a dark medium, and not as it exists in its unpampering and unfettering connexion with the Synod of Ulster and the Church of Scotland.

NOTE F, p. 164.

In those counties of Scotland in which there are few strangers from the other kingdoms, and where there is a sufficient provision, or nearly so, for all the people hearing the Gospel, the amount of crime is exceedingly small. The numbers convicted of *any* crime in any of those counties in 1836, were as follows: Argyle, 32; Banff, 12; Berwick, 8; Bute, 2; Dumfries, 9; Moray, 14; Nairn, 2; Peebles, 5; Selkirk, 10; Sutherland, 6.

In 1832, the Society for Improving Prison Discipline, report in England, 1 criminal in 740 of the people. In Ireland, 1 in 490; while in Scotland there was only 1 in 1130. In 1836, there was in Ireland 1 criminal in 428, while in Scotland there was only one in 1080. So that in Scotland the proportion of crime is much more than one half less than in Ireland. In 1834 there were in Ireland 43 executions, and in Scotland only 4.

Convicts on board the hulk, Essex, at Kingstown, with the number of Presbyterians. This includes all the Presbyterian convicts sent from Ireland in these years :—

YEAR.	CONVICTS.	PRESBYTERIANS.
1830.	619	6
1831.	638	20
1832.	814	25
1833.	569	17
1834.	373	9

Signed, JOHN LAMB, *Keeper.*

In the Seven years from 1828 to 1834, 256 persons were hanged in Ireland; of these only *four* were Presbyterians.

NOTE G, p. 167.

In a Treatise on the Church, by Edward Barwick, of Trinity College, Dublin, published in Belfast in 1813, and for years past offered for sale in Londonderry, it is said—“ We must recollect that those *pretended ministers* who officiate in the meetings of *Presbyterians*, &c., have not been ordained by bishops. And, consequently, as I have already demonstrated, these men have not been sent by God; and, therefore, *it must be utterly unlawful to attend their ministry.* For, ‘how can we hear without a preacher, and how can they preach except they be sent?’ The Lord forbids us to hear them, because ‘he hath not sent them, and, therefore, they shall not profit this people.’ To hear, then, in such a case, is *rebellion against God*, and *utterly unlawful*, and is countenancing them, and hardening THEIR PRESUMPTION AND DARING IMPOSTURE.”—Page 146.

He quotes the following sentence with approbation from Dr. T. Brett's Discourse of Church Government:—

“That episcopacy is of divine right—that *to separate from the orthodox bishops is schismatical—that schism is a damnable sin.*”
—Page 327.

In another passage, he says—“The case being thus, the *nonentity* of these *unhappy people's* church appears upon a double account, first, as wanting a *ministry*, and second, as wanting the due preaching of the pure word and right administration of the sacraments. So that the difference between us and this people, as already considered, is a *ministry* and *no ministry*, a *church* and *no church.*”

NOTE H, p. 168.

THE QUEEN THE HEAD OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

“Be it enacted by the authority of this present parliament that the king, our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England; and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, immunities, profits, and commodities, to the said dignity of supreme head of the said church belonging and appertaining; and that our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such *errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities*, whatsoever they be, which, by any manner of *spiritual authority* or jurisdiction, ought or may be lawfully reformed.”—26 Henry VIII, cap. 1.

In the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, an act of parliament was passed, declaring—“Moreover, all persons, in any public employ, whether civil or *ecclesiastical*, are obliged to take an oath in recognition of the queen's right to the crown, and of her supremacy in *all causes ecclesiastical* and civil, on penalty of forfeiting all their promotions in the church, and of being declared incapable of holding any public office.”

In the 1st of Elizabeth, kings are called “the *supreme governors of our church upon earth.*”

In the king's declaration, prefixed to the Thirty-nine Articles, he says—"We are supreme governor of the Church of England." That the power here claimed refers not to secular, but spiritual things, is plain. It is said of the articles, "which we do therefore ratify and confirm, requiring *all* our loving subjects to continue in *the uniform profession thereof*, and prohibiting the *least difference* from the said articles."

In the thirty-fourth Article, it is said—"Whosoever doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the church, hurteth the authority of the magistrate."

In Article thirty-seven—"The king's majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England—unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be *ecclesiastical* or civil, in *all causes*, doth appertain."

Thomas Stephens, in his edition of the Thirty-nine Articles, says—"In Elizabeth's reign the words "supreme head" were changed into "supreme governor." He adds, although the words be different, the meaning is the same.

The second canon of the Anglican church declares every man who denies this supreme authority to the king to be *ipso facto* excommunicated."

NOTE I, p. 169.

THE CLERGY MAY NOT MEET IN CONVOCATION, OR ENACT OR PROMULGATE ANY DECREE WITHOUT THE QUEEN'S LEAVE.

After Henry was declared head of the English church, the clergy, assembled in convocation, sent up their submission to the king—the contents were, "that the clergy acknowledged all convocations ought to be assembled by the king's writ, and promised in *verbo sacerdotii*, that they would never make nor execute any new canons or constitutions, without the royal assent." This submission was confirmed by parliament.

By 32 Henry VIII, cap. 26, it is enacted, "That all decrees and ordinances which shall be made and ordained by the archbishops, bishops, and doctors, and shall be *published with the king's advice and confirmation by his letters patent*, in and upon the matters of *Christian faith and lawful rites and ceremonies*, shall be in every point thereof *believed, obeyed, and performed.*"

In 37 Henry VIII, cap. 17, it is declared that, "Archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but *by, under, and from*, his royal majesty, and that his majesty is the only supreme head of the Church of England and Ireland; to whom, by Holy Scripture, all authority and power is wholly given to hear and determine *all manner of causes ecclesiastical*, and to correct all manner of *heresies, errors, vices, and sins, whatsoever.*"

"The bishops took out commissions from the king, by which they acknowledged that all jurisdiction, civil and *ecclesiastical*, flowed from the king, and that they exercised it only at the *king's courtesy*, and that, as they *had it of his bounty*, so they would be ready to deliver it up at his pleasure; and, therefore, the king did empower them IN HIS STEAD to *ordain*, give institution, and do all the other parts of the episcopal function." Bishop Burnet adds, "by this they were made *the king's ministers indeed.*"—History of Reformation Abridged, vol. i, p. 228.

In vol. ii, p. 4, he says—"In the first year of the reign of Edward VI, "All that held offices were required to come and renew their commissions. Among the rest, the bishops came and took out such commissions as were granted in the former reign, viz., to hold their bishopricks during pleasure, and were empowered in the *king's name, as his delegates*, to perform *all the parts* of the episcopal function."

In the king's declaration, prefixed to the Thirty-nine Articles, he says—"The clergy in convocation is to settle them"—(differences)—"having *first obtained leave* under *our* broad seal so to do, and *we approving* their said ordinances and constitutions."

In the preface to the "Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical," king Charles says—"Forasmuch as the said archbishops, &c., having met—and by virtue of our *said authority* granted unto them, have treated of, concluded, and agreed upon certain canons, &c., to *the end purposed, by us limited and prescribed* unto them; and have, therefore, offered and presented the same unto us, most humbly desiring us to give our royal assent unto their said canons, &c." "And, furthermore, we do, by our said prerogative royal, and *supreme authority* in *causes ecclesiastical*, establish these said canons, &c."

In a proclamation by Charles, in 1626, it is said that his Majesty would admit of no innovations in the *doctrine, discipline, and government*, of the church."—Mosheim.

That the church is *still* under the civil power, is stated by Dr. Boyton in his sermon before the primate, page 23. He says—“The ministers of the church—however distinct the church is from the state—owe an obedience to its laws, even when *these regulate merely spiritual duties.*”

NOTE K, p. 171.

The Rev. R. H. Froude, late Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, and a priest of the Church of England, says—“You will be shocked at my avowal that I am every day becoming a less and less loyal son of the Reformation. I think people are injudicious who talk against the Roman Catholics for worshipping saints, and honouring the virgin and images,” &c. “Your *trumpery* principle about scripture being the sole rule of faith in fundamentals, (I nauseate the word.)” “Really I hate the Reformation and the reformers more and more.”

Other divines of Oxford say—“The very name of Protestantism, cold and negative and sceptical as it is, ought to be abolished among us.” “That odious Protestantism”—“I am more and more indignant at the Protestant doctrine on the subject of the Eucharist.” “O! Mother Church of Rome.” On Transubstantiation—“I should like to know why you flinch from saying that the power of *making the body and blood of Christ* is vested in the successors of the apostles.”

In the seventy-fifth Tract for the Times, prayers from the Romish Breviary are recommended.

NOTE L, p. 172.

The Rev. Robert J. M'Ghee, in one of his letters to the clergy, written when the bill for cutting off the bishops was passing through parliament, says—“If the bishops and clergy of Ireland submit to this bill—not for the spoliation of the property of the church, (which is too contemptible, base as it is, to speak of,) but to the annihilation of her episcopal offices by a set of laymen—farewell the Church of Ireland; the principle is gone—farewell the Church of England too. Let us call ourselves a body of

legalized dissenters from our ancient church—let us call ourselves a religious club, instituted by the House of Commons—*durante bene placito*; but as to an apostolical church, with apostolical office and authority, let us preserve enough of Christian honesty and truth no longer to usurp the title. When you walk through your deserted diocese, and when the popish priest enquires, where is your bishop? Who banished him? Has the church dispensed with his services, or was he not the mere puppet of the House of Commons, who could turn him off the stage as it pleased? Do you pretend to call your church a church of Christ? What will you answer? I defy the talent of sophistry to refute him. Brethren, be not deceived, this is an attack that cuts deeper than you think—it is a blow from Popery at the root of your existence. The people of Christ shall be secure—his spiritual church no parliament can ever reach; but if we submit to this—if we take the ecclesiastical authority which God has given to his church, and say it shall be voted away by laymen, some of whom are Infidel, and some are Popish—men who, even in the very act of uttering their votes, are violating their solemn oaths—then the Established Church of England is gone; then indeed she shall fill up the measure of her iniquities, and deserve to be trodden under foot for ever.”

NOTE M, p. 175.

“At every avoidance of a bishopric, the king may send to the dean and chapter his usual licence to proceed to election, which is always to be accompanied with a letter missive from the king, containing the name of the person, he would have them to elect; and if the dean and chapter delay the election above twelve days, the nomination is to devolve on the king, who may, by letters patent, appoint such person as he pleases. This election or nomination, if it be of a bishop, must be signified by the king’s letters patent to the archbishop of the province; if it be of an archbishop, to the other archbishops and two bishops, or to four bishops, requiring them to confirm, invest, and consecrate the person so elected, which they are bound to do immediately.”—Blackstone’s Commentaries, book i, chap. 11.

NOTE N, p. 175.

EXTRACT FROM THE ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN DERRY.

“The system of episcopal appointment needs a radical change; in most cases religious fitness for the office *is never* sought after—the mitre is bestowed by the *minister of the day*, as a reward for some *political* service, or to aggrandise an *ambitious* dependant—the claims of *learning, piety, and usefulness* are overlooked—partizanship is the paramount requisite in the candidate. But the wicked folly of such a system is still more apparent when we remember that her Majesty may now be surrounded by *popish ministers* of state;—emancipation has made Romanists eligible to the premiership, and Mr. O’Connell does in fact this moment possess immense control over the disposal of bishoprics in the established church. In fact it is merely a matter of time, depending on the contingency of the liberal party’s holding office, whether genuine Protestantism shall be driven from the Episcopal bench altogether.”—Londonderry Sentinel, 1839.

NOTE O, p. 180.

“There is one thing—we could heartily wish there were no more—yet wanting to complete the reformation of this church, which is the restoring a primitive discipline against scandalous persons. The establishing the government of the church in ecclesiastical hands, and taking it out of *lay* hands, who have so long profaned it, and have exposed the authority of the church, and the censures of it, chiefly excommunication, to the contempt of the nation, by which the reverence due to holy things is in so great a measure lost, and the dreadfulest of all censures is now become the most scorned and despised.”—Bishop Burnet’s History of Reformation.

“Such were the benefits arising from the exercise of this holy discipline in the primitive church. With us, both are equally neglected and unknown.”—Barwick, p. 320.

NOTE P, p. 181.

Dr. Trapp says, “We may wish that the Presbyterians were

Episcopal; that they were, in this respect, ‘altogether such as we are;’ I might add, with too much reason, ‘except these bonds; I mean the restraints by which our discipline is shackled and fettered and hindered from exerting itself to the salvation of souls.’ —Discourses, vol. ii. Barwick, lamenting this, quoted the case of Dr. Wilson, who “*was thrown into a dungeon, where he was very nigh perishing, for refusing the Sacrament to the strumpet of a Deputy.*”

NOTE Q, p. 183.

The practice, pursued in the Established Church, of admitting all persons to solemn ordinances, has proved most injurious to the interests of morality in this country; and furnishes a constant temptation to our Presbyterian ministers and elders to relax church order, as those scandalous offenders who will not submit to the laws of Christ when faithfully administered find at once a refuge from all discipline in the English Church. In the few years I have been in the ministry I have known many instances of this—and I may add that the case given in the text is *not* imaginary, but one now at hand and of recent occurrence.

NOTE R, p. 185.

The Fourteenth Canon enacts, that “No minister shall refuse or delay to christen any child according to the form of the book of Common Prayer, that is brought to the church to him on Sundays or holidays to be christened; or to bury *any* corpse that is brought to the church or church-yard, convenient warning being given to him, thereof, before, in such manner as is prescribed in the said book of Common Prayer. And if he shall refuse to christen the one, or bury the other, except the party deceased were denounced, excommunicated *Majori excommunicatione*, for some grievous and notorious crime, and no man able to testify of his repentance, he shall be suspended by the bishop of the diocese from his ministry, by the space of three months.”

NOTE S, p. 185.

“The Rev. W. P. F. of Dunkerrin, in an appeal to the public,

relative to the wants of his large family, submits that he is twenty-eight years a curate, having a wife and eleven children to provide for; and that the present bishop of Killaloe will be the tenth under whom he has served."—Londonderry Sentinel, Feb. 1839.

NOTE T, p. 189.

Archbishop Leighton sent six episcopal divines, of whom Burnet was one, to preach and argue with the people. He says the episcopal clergy who were yet in the country *could not argue much for any thing*. We were indeed amazed to see a poor commonalty so capable of arguing on points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion. Upon all these topics they had texts of Scripture at hand, and were ready with their answers to any thing that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the meanest of them, their cottagers and their servants. The ministers had brought the people to such a degree of knowledge, that cottagers and servants would have prayed extempore; they had a comprehension of matters of religion greater than I have seen among people of that sort any where."—Bishop Burnet's History of his own time, vol. i, 217—409.

DISCOURSE IV.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER PORTER GOUDY,

STRABANE.

WORSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Power of the Church to decree Rites and Ceremonies examined—Forms of Prayer—Administration of the Sacraments.

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—JOHN, iv, 24.

THIS text assumes the existence of two grand principles as necessary ingredients in all acceptable worship. First, that it be offered in sincerity. That this is indispensable will be conceded by all. “God is a Spirit.” He can feel no pleasure in the homage of the insincere; he can take no delight in the lowliest prostrations of the hypocrite. “They who worship him, must worship him in spirit.” But, further, the text assumes that if men would rightly worship their Maker, they must do so not only with uprightness of intention, but in such a manner as he hath appointed in his word. “They that worship him must worship him in truth;” that is, as we may understand the Teacher of the church to mean by this latter phrase, *in accordance with his truth*, or in such a way as shall be consonant to his revealed mind and will.

That the great object of worship is not indifferent with respect to the *manner* in which that worship is paid, we have abundant reason for concluding. It

would argue a very inadequate conception of his character on our part to assume that he is too exalted a Being to occupy himself with things so trivial. It is at once the distinction and the glory of the character of God that he can attend at one and the same moment to affairs the most magnificent and the most minute, that the same far-reaching Intelligence that presides over the destinies of a boundless universe can at the same time number the hairs of the human head, and mark every sparrow that falleth to the ground. Let us not imagine that a Being such as this takes little notice of the manner in which his creatures bow down to him and serve him. Very contrary to such a surmise is the testimony of his own word. In the moral law, the immutable record of his will to men, he has no sooner, in the first precept, shown that He alone is the proper object of worship, than he proceeds to caution them in the second against rendering that worship in any other way than that which he has prescribed. If we would desire a practical illustration of his solicitude in this matter we are presented with one in his address to his servant Moses, when after having given him various minute instructions respecting the erection and furnishing of the tabernacle, he concludes the whole with that remarkable caution, "and see that thou make *all things* according to the pattern which was showed thee in the mount." (Exod. xxv, 40.) Let it be remembered, besides, that some of the severest judgments wherewith the Most High visited men under the old law were inflicted, not on account of their doing service to such as were no gods, but on account of their not worshipping the

true God *after the appointed order*. Such was the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, who were consumed at the altar, not for offering sacrifice to a strange god, but for offering strange fire before the God of Israel, which he commanded them not. In the New Testament, again, if we mark the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, the only Lawgiver of the church, we will see that he exercised the same jealous guardianship over the purity of Jehovah's worship under that dispensation that he had formerly done under the ancient one, ere as yet he had "become flesh and dwelt among us." We find him demanding from the true worshippers that they should worship the Father, not according to the dictates of their own caprice or fancy, but in exact and undeviating conformity to his own revealed instructions. We hear him thus addressing his accredited ambassadors, when sending them forth to the evangelization of the world, "Go ye and disciple all nations, teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever* I have commanded you. (Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.) We mark his reprehension of the tradition-loving and rite-making Pharisees of his day, "In vain do they worship me, says he, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. xv, 9.) And we cannot fail to observe a striking significance in that solemn declaration which he elsewhere places on record, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall break one of these *least* commandments, and shall teach men so, the same shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v, 19.)

Now, if such be the sentiments of the great King of Zion, if in all ages, both under the Jewish and Gospel

dispensations, he has shown himself solicitous for the maintenance of the integrity of his worship, it follows that the arrangements of the church now should be framed in accordance with the wishes of her exalted Head. The Presbyterian churches have been framed in evident recognition of this great principle. They have modelled the internal structure of their Zion in the full and deep-felt conviction of this truth that they are not at liberty to introduce any thing into the church in point of doctrine or worship of which Jesus Christ has not enjoined or sanctioned the adoption. Their views are embodied in these words of The Confession: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are *in any wise contrary to his word, or beside it* in matters of faith and worship. So that to obey such commandments out of conscience is to betray true liberty of conscience." These are the views of Presbyterians. On these their practice in the worship of God is founded. It is needless to describe what that practice is to you. You are acquainted with our forms of worship; they are few and simple and scriptural. And if we be taunted, as we have often been, with the bare and cold aspect which is thus given to our Sabbath services, the meagre and homely and unattractive air which is thus imparted to our religious assemblies, we answer in the words of the immortal Chatham, "The ambition of *Dissenters* is to keep more closely to the college of fishermen than to the college of cardinals, to the doctrines of apostles than to the decrees of bishops; they contend for a scriptural creed and spiritual worship."

In strong contrast with the views of Presbyterians on this point stand the belief and practice of the Church of England. In the 20th Article we find the following high prerogative authoritatively claimed, "The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies."¹ Now, if this power be once conceded to her, it would be useless, and not only useless but wrong, to censure any of her multiplied and objectionable usages. But this power Presbyterians will not by any means concede. Instead of admitting it to be a lawful claim, they affirm it to be unqualified usurpation.

We proceed to examine this principle. We shall first canvass some reasons adduced by a late writer on the church to show that the church has this power, and then place before you one or two arguments against it.

And here let us premise that Presbyterians admit that every church on earth has *some* power in this matter, intrusted to her by her Head. They admit that the church possesses what an eminent divine has termed the *power of arrangement*. That is, Christ permits every church to arrange all those circumstantial modes of worship, which though in general necessary by divine precept, are yet in particulars to be determined by human prudence. Such, for example, as the regulating the time at which public worship shall commence on the Sabbath, the place in which it shall be conducted, and things of a like nature. These

¹ It is an extraordinary yet undeniable fact, that in the two original manuscript copies of the Thirty-nine Articles, there is not to be found the slightest trace of that obnoxious clause in the twentieth, which assigns to the church "the power to decree rites and ceremonies;" and it is a fact equally indisputable and instructive, that Laud, on his trial in the Star Chamber, was openly charged with having *forged* the clause in question to suit his own purposes.

are things which do not concern the essence or form of Christ's ordinances or the moral conduct of Christians; they are matters which are connected with the regular proceedings of any society, and which human prudence is competent to settle. But we ask, Is there not a plain and wide distinction between these and unwarranted human inventions? Does it follow that because the church is free to arrange matters like these, that therefore she is at liberty to enact rites which are neither required in Scripture, nor implied in, nor deducible from any injunction of the Bible? Does it follow that therefore she has a right to decree ceremonies which make important changes in Christ's sacraments, and which are imposed on his people as indispensable terms of communion? Unquestionably not. But this is what the English church claims. Presbyterians maintain that she is not justified in doing so. For this, the writer on "The Church" seems to think them chargeable with inconsistency. "Every church visible on earth, says he, must have its usages."¹ We admit that Presbyterians have usages respecting church order, which, be it remembered, are not unauthorised by Scripture, and not imposed upon conscience; but we protest (and we do so with perfect consistency) against the claim set up by the Church of England to enact laws which are unsanctioned by the law of Christ, and to which there is required from his people an implicit and unqualified submission.

Let us proceed to notice the arguments which the writer on "The Church" has offered in support of the validity of this claim. His *first* argument is

¹ Sermons, p. 129.

drawn from the *practice of the Jewish church*. Though that church had a ritual ordained by God himself, yet there were afterwards introduced some important additions to it, such, for example, as the existence of the synagogue, and the ministerial services connected therewith. These, we are reminded, were additions to the ritual, as originally arranged by God, and delivered to his servant Moses. And we are told, that so far from being condemned as unwarrantable, Jesus Christ himself attended on the synagogue services, and thus stamped them with his approval. In reply to this, it may be remarked first, that it is a very doubtful principle on which to proceed, that whatever Christ did not personally condemn during his ministry on earth, may be regarded by us as lawful. This, it may be presumed, would establish the innocence of many actions which no Christian would vindicate. Waiving this, however, we observe that the argument is without any weight for this reason: the Jewish church, from its peculiar circumstances, could be in this matter no precedent to the Christian. Its constitution was no doubt at first modelled by the hand of God himself. But many things connected with its ritual arrangements were left unsettled, in order that in after times, and in foreseen emergencies, certain alterations or additions might be made, adapting it to the varying circumstances in which it should be placed. And for the due accomplishment of this work, let it be carefully borne in mind there were then in the church *inspired men*, such as Samuel, David, Nehemiah, Ezra, and others—men furnished with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and qualified to introduce needful

successive changes in the church's order. That this was the fact there is abundant evidence to prove; in truth it is unreasonable to suppose that it could have been otherwise. Would God have permitted rash and unqualified men to make innovations on the service of his temple, and arbitrarily impose on his people whatever ceremonies their fancy or caprice might dictate? We may be assured that he would not. And if he did not sanction this in time past, no more does he permit it now. The church of England may invent an endless catalogue of ceremonies, but let not her advocates urge on her behalf the practice of ancient Israel; let them fall back on the old and only plea, the authority of the Church of England.

Another argument which the writer of "Sermons on the Church" employs on this subject is taken from the *character of the Christian church*. He reminds us that it was of an extending, diffusive character, "whose field was the world." "We conceive it impossible," says he, "that a church of this character could be without the power to ordain rites and ceremonies;"¹ and to confirm this argument he refers to the case proposed to the Christian church at Jerusalem. He quotes a passage from the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in which it is said that "the apostles and elders came together to consider of the matter;" and after having done so, issued a decree "that they which from the Gentiles were turned unto God should abstain from things strangled and from blood." That is, they regulated in this particular instance the practice of the church. Now in reference to this, we have only to say that the

¹ Sermons, p. 134.

decree which the council at Jerusalem here issued was a righteous and scriptural one. It was in perfect harmony with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament. It forbade a practice in the newly converted Gentiles which would have given great offence to their Jewish brethren. By the law of Christ, therefore, they were bound to abstain from it. And in enjoining them to do so the church was only commanding them to fulfil their duty. The council at Jerusalem, it is thus perfectly obvious, had a right to enact and publish this decree; and every regularly constituted church now would have a right to enact and publish a similar one. But will any one say that this precedent justifies the Church of England in inventing and authorising a mass of unscriptural ceremonies? It is clear that the peculiar character of the Christian church affords no presumption that it should have a power lodged in it to create certain rites, and arbitrarily impose them as terms of communion upon Christians. Had the all-wise Saviour thought that this feature of her character rendered that power necessary, he would have told the church that she might ordain ceremonies, and he would have told her further *what* ceremonies she should ordain. He would not have left this matter to be settled by fallible men. But he has not given the slightest hint that any such power is entrusted to her, and therefore the argument attempted to be drawn from the character of the Christian church is utterly futile—a gratuitous assumption.

There is just one other argument advanced by this writer, and it is a strange one. It is this, that there is hardly any thing said about rites and ceremonies

throughout the whole compass of the New Testament. A plain man would have thought that, on that account, the church of Christ should beware of introducing any. But this very fact our author ingeniously converts into a reason why the Church of England should multiply and impose them! "On the point of rites and ceremonies," says he, "the New Testament Scriptures are almost wholly silent. They inculcate a few general rules, rather expressing the principles by which such matters were to be regulated, than defining what rites and ceremonies each community should adopt."¹ We answer, we are perfectly aware that the Scriptures do inculcate a few general rules, and we know besides *how far* these general rules and principles authorise the church to go. They convey to her, as we have already said, the power of arrangement, the power of arranging *circumstantials*, so as that they shall be in every respect conformable with the word of God. But can our author show, that because these "general rules" permit the church to go thus far, they also warrant her to frame rites which Jesus and his apostles never contemplated, to recognise as essential to Christian fellowship, things which are neither enjoined nor implied in a single precept of the Bible? We are satisfied that he cannot. Yet, until he does this, his argument drawn from the silence of Scripture, from the fact that it announces principles without entering into details, goes for nothing. It is based on a mere begging of the question.

We proceed now to mention one or two considerations which show that the right assumed by the

¹ Sermons, p. 136.

Church of England to decree ceremonies is wholly unwarranted. And here, first, we must see that the assumption of such a right is a practical impeachment of Christ's wisdom. It takes for granted that he has left his institutions imperfect, that they are defective from their very simplicity, that they require to be, to a considerable extent, new-modelled, in order that they may affect the imagination, and produce a suitable impression on the feelings of mankind. But, it may be asked, had such additional rites been requisite, would not Jesus Christ, who best knows our frame, have himself appointed them? Would he have left the discovery and arrangement of them to fallible men, who have, in all ages, shown themselves, both by the *nature* and the *number* of the ceremonies they have devised, so utterly incompetent to the task? This consideration, my brethren, presses itself irresistibly on the mind. The assertion by any church of an absolute right to invent and impose religious forms, is not only an infringement of Christ's prerogative, but a manifest imputation on his wisdom.

Again, if we concede for a moment that the Church of England possesses this right, to decree ceremonies, it seems necessarily to follow that every other church must possess a similar right. There can no good reason be given why a body of fallible men in England should have it, and a body of fallible men at Rome be denied it. Would not this principle, then, fully carried out, directly sanction the abominations of Popery? But it may be urged, in answer to this, that the Church of England has carefully guarded and limited her claim. She has said (and the writer on the Church has directed our

attention to this point) that "it is not lawful for her to decree any thing contrary to God's word written." It seems, however, to be implied in this, that she may ordain any thing which *she considers* not contrary to God's word. And, in the exercise of this assumed power, she has ordained (to take a single example) the sign of the cross in baptism. We may ask, then, has she not a right to ordain a hundred or five hundred other ceremonies equally instructive and edifying as this one? Has she not an indisputable right, for instance, to enjoin the use of the salt and the spittle in baptism, the chrism, the extreme unction, the consecration of water as well as of earth, with, if she think proper, a thousand other crossings and sprinklings, and interminable gesticulations? Who could object to these? Are they a whit more contrary to God's word written than is the sign of the cross in baptism?

But further, it may be asked, with respect to this restriction, that, "nothing shall be ordained contrary to God's word;"—who is to be the judge? The author of the "Sermons" says, "There are many things neither enjoined nor *alluded to* in God's word, which the Church may deem it highly expedient to ordain," with this proviso, however, "that it be not an idle ceremony, but tending to profit and edification."¹ Now, who is to judge and decide whether these ceremonies be idle or no? Are the people to be the judges? Episcopalians will not say so. If they are, and if they are at liberty to reject every ceremony which they conscientiously hold to be idle and contrary to God's word, then the alleged power of the

¹ Sermons on the Church, pp. 126, 127.

Church of England is a shadow, and her whole fabric of ecclesiastical authority falls to the ground. But we know that her people have no voice whatever in the matter. The Church alone claims the authority. She issues her behests, she proclaims, as if infallible, what ceremonies are edifying and what are not, and she demands from the people, to all her fiats, a reverent and unquestioning submission.

And who, or what, let us ask, is *the church* that claims and exercises this lordship over the heritage of God? In whom is the authority lodged by the constitution of the Church of England? I trust, my brethren, you need not to be informed. Those of you who listened to the masterly exposition delivered here on last Sabbath evening, well know that the authority is lodged not in the *ecclesiastical*, but wholly in the *civil* power; not in the bishops or clergy, but in the king or queen and parliament of this realm. I stop not to establish this point; it has been already demonstrated; the Church of England herself, in her written laws, and in her practical interpretation of them, has uniformly confessed it. It stands thus, therefore, that the civil rulers of this country, the queen and her council, may devise and enact whatever ceremonies they choose, (provided only they do not conceive them to be contrary to God's word written,) and may fasten these as an intolerable yoke around the necks and the consciences of Christians! This is the power demanded, this is the privilege which the writer of the Sermons says ought surely to be conceded to the Established Church of England. Never will Presbyterians concede to her or to any church on earth so monstrous a claim. Never will

they cease to protest against it as an invasion of the prerogatives of Messiah's throne, a trampling on the liberty wherewith his people are made free.¹

Having thus shown you that the Church of England has no authority from Scripture to invent and enforce ceremonies, we shall now proceed to examine the nature and propriety of some of those rites which she has embodied in her ritual. It will at once be seen that it is necessary we should do this. Our object is to exhibit to you the scripturality of our Presbyterian worship. But in those various usages which the Church of England has adopted, and which she regards as so essential that she makes them terms of fellowship, it is obvious that there is an implied practical condemnation of that worship. In the prosecution of our object therefore, the establishment and vindication of truth, it is plainly indispensable that we take notice of these usages, and point out in them whatever may seem to be at variance with God's word, or a departure from the simplicity of the Gospel. The writer of the "Sermons on the Church." (What Church? Is the Episcopal church THE CHURCH—and is there no other? Is this mere fragmentary section of christendom to be regarded as the universal Zion of God? There is a vast deal of spiritual arrogance in this title). The writer of these sermons strongly deprecates our taking any notice of the Church's ceremonies. He says "we should have expected that, in a matter so entirely belonging to the internal discipline and arrangements of the Church, other *communities*" (not churches) "would have seen the propriety, if not the necessity, of abstaining from

¹ See Note A.

all strictures on a subject with which they are in no way connected.”¹ That is, Christ’s servants have no concern whatever with the manner in which others conduct God’s worship—whether they keep it “pure and entire,” or whether they desecrate or corrupt it. Surely then episcopalian divines should beware in future of insinuating a word, even of most delicate reprehension, against the superstitions of the Church of Rome! But is not this very inconsistent? Our author invites us, in his opening sermon, to walk about his Zion, to mark well her towers, her palaces, her bulwarks. Would he have us remain continually on the outside? Are we to stand gazing, in tantalizing exclusion, on her lofty spires, and massive turrets, and frowning battlements? Are there no architectural or pictorial beauties to be discerned in the interior? Surely we may, to use his own words, step within the walls of the Temple, and scrutinise the Church’s internal arrangements.

The first topic to which we shall call your attention, connected with these arrangements, is *the use of forms of prayer in public worship*. And here we may premise, that Presbyterians do not maintain the absolute unlawfulness of all forms of prayer. Their standards do not assert this; their ministers do not act upon it. They occasionally recommend forms when circumstances seem to require them: to heads of families, for instance, who might otherwise be incapable of conducting family worship; but they exhort them not to rest in the use of these, but to seek to become, as soon as possible, independent of the aid which they afford. But what they object to

¹ Sermons on the Church, page 122.

is this, the use of a fixed and permanent form in conducting the devotions of the church, and more especially the imposition of this by human authority.

We shall show you that the *testimony of Scripture is not in favour of this practice but the contrary*. The author, to whom we have so often referred, appeals to the Old Testament in proof that there should be set forms of prayer. He asserts that "the gift of inspired utterance was poured out in a richer flood under the Jewish dispensation than in the latter ages of the Church."¹ What an extraordinary statement! The very opposite is the fact. Every reader of Scripture knows that there was a far more copious effusion of the gifts and graces of the Spirit under the New Testament than under the Old. And therefore, if public fixed liturgies had ever been intended by God for the church, they would, undoubtedly, have been prescribed under the Ancient Economy. Our author has quoted from the Old Testament several poetical passages, several of what the old divines called "*Psalm Prayers*," in support of his theory. But surely he knows that these were of the strain of songs, were probably composed in metre, and were designed to be sung in public worship. There can no argument, therefore, be brought from these: there can no argument be brought from any part of the Old Testament whatever. We are ready to admit that there are examples to be found in it of some short forms, such as the benediction pronounced on ancient Israel, but we affirm that the great majority of the prayers recorded in the Old Testament are *free prayers*, conceived at the moment, and arising

¹ Sermons on the Church, p. 85.

from the circumstances in which those who uttered them were placed, thus plainly showing that, though God has not prohibited the occasional use of forms, extemporaneous supplication is the mode which his Spirit recommends to the church.

But, to come to the New Testament, let us notice the argument drawn from the Lord's prayer. It has been often appealed to, in vindication of forms. We believe that it gives no sanction to them. It was manifestly designed by Christ as a pattern, after the manner of which our petitions should be framed, not as a formula to which we should undeviatingly adhere. And for these reasons:—First, our Lord, in the Gospel of Luke, repeats the prayer, the same in substance, yet with numerous verbal alterations. Without doubt, he did this designedly, and perhaps, in order to remind us that mere words are of comparatively little moment in prayer, but may receive new combinations as judgment may direct or occasion require. Again, it is important to notice that, in this prayer, the name of Christ does not occur. It is not said, in any part of it, that it is offered up in his name, or through his mediation. Is it to be supposed that a permanent form would thus have been arranged for the church, in which no distinct reference was to be found to that great High Priest on account of whose merit and pleading alone the church could hope that her petitions would be regarded? What strengthens almost into certainty the presumption, that the Lord's prayer was not intended as a form is, that it was never used by the Apostles. They were inspired men, and if this prayer had been intended as a perpetual form to the church, they would surely

have occasionally repeated it, that they might thus give it the warrant of their adoption. But they have not done so. Their prayers, and they were many, were in the strictest sense extemporaneous. These considerations prove that the Lord's prayer was never prescribed by Christ as a form for his people;—it might be occasionally used by them, but it was left on record chiefly as a pattern, after which they should model their petitions.

Let us here advert to the argument which our author advances for the use of a liturgy from the alleged fact, that *liturgies were used in the ancient synagogue*. Even supposing that he could prove this, it would serve him little, for it is to be recollected that, at the time referred to, religion had sunk into a state of the utmost declension, and had become, both in its spirit and practice, disfigured by manifold corruptions. But we affirm that the assertion made by our author is incapable of proof. He says "fragments of the Jewish Liturgy of our Saviour's days are still extant." We ask, where? He goes on to say, "we shall not occupy time by producing evidence of this,"—wishing, of course, to convey the impression that the fact is so clear, so incontestable, that it would be a waste of time to stop to prove it. Now, on the contrary, we maintain that no time could have been better spent than that employed in establishing this point. It would have entitled our author to the thanks of the whole learned world had he succeeded. For it is a task which has never yet been accomplished; and what is more, we are bold to affirm that it never will be accomplished. The whole statement respecting these pretended Liturgies used in

the synagogue, in the time of Christ, rests on the credit of Rabbinical writers, whose testimony is of little value. It may be observed, besides, that it would be necessary for our author to show that these imaginary synagogue forms were imposed on the worshippers, and that those who officiated were never permitted to deviate from them in the slightest particular, ere his argument would afford any support to the theory he wishes to establish. But he seems to think that Christ's presence in the synagogue, as a regular worshipper, is the best proof, not only of the lawfulness, but (as he expresses it) "almost of the peculiar propriety" of Liturgies. Observe, there is no satisfactory evidence that there were any Liturgies used in it at all. But even if there had been, we assert that our Lord's being present without uttering a word in condemnation of them, could be no proof of their lawfulness, much less of their "peculiar propriety." It is a most absurd principle this which this writer so frequently and readily adopts, that what Christ did not rebuke, he therefore of course sanctioned. Let us quote a single example to show its untenableness. By the law of God, the high priesthood was fixed in the eldest of Aaron's family. In our Lord's time, it was set to sale in the most mercenary manner. Caiaphas was both sacriligious and an usurper. Yet where in the New Testament do we find that Christ declared either against the person or the practice? He was a "public rebuker of improprieties;" yet where did he rebuke this one? We will see then, brethren, that this argument urged against free prayer, and in favour of prescribed forms, is without any weight

whatever. There is not the shadow of credible proof that there were any such forms in the synagogue service; and even had they been used, we have no right to infer from Christ's presence and silence that he signified his approval of that mode of worship.

We go on now to show that extemporary social prayer was that which obtained in the *primitive churches*. Let any one read with attention the Acts of the Apostles. There we have many recorded specimens of joint supplication. Can it be conceived that they were other than extemporaneous? For instance, on that solemn occasion, the selection of a proper person to fill the vacant apostleship, "they prayed and said, Thou Lord that knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these thou hast chosen that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship." Here is an example of social prayer. Were the petitions in this case read from a book, or were they uttered extempore? Again, when Peter was cast into prison by Herod, we are told that "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." Did the members of the church in this urgent case confine themselves to precomposed forms? Did they manifest the intense eagerness of their desire and the irrepressible agony of their fear by first selecting and arranging a certain number of petitions, then submitting them to the inspection of the church, and afterwards coolly rehearsing them over for the church's edification? The idea is preposterous. Again: If a form of prayer were so essential to the church, why did not Christ or his apostles leave one, or at least drop some hint as to its formation? At the close of the last supper, for instance, when Jesus

was about to bid farewell to the church he loved, and when he was exhorting his servants to enlarge their desires and to intreat in his name ampler and richer blessings from on high than they had yet done, why did not he on this affecting occasion leave on record a complete and comprehensive formula which would guide his people's devotions throughout all succeeding ages? When, again, we hear Paul exhorting his church "to pray always with *all prayer* and supplication," are we to suppose his meaning to be that they should on all occasions limit themselves to one prescribed and unchanging form of words? And did he, out of his abundant gifts, furnish one for their use? No, brethren: not the remotest suggestion of the kind ever fell from him or from his Master. Is not then the conclusion irresistible, that when Episcopalians tell us of the importance, and by making it a term of fellowship, indicate the necessity of forms, they thereby indirectly impugn the wisdom of Christ and his apostles?

We proceed to observe that the testimony of *Christian antiquity* is in favour of the manner of prayer which Presbyterians adopt, and against the use of liturgies. The early fathers knew nothing of these. We shall quote here but one testimony: it is from Tertullian. Describing the manner in which the devotional exercises of the church were performed in his time, he says, "looking up to heaven, they spread abroad their hands because innocent, uncovered their heads because not ashamed, and *without a monitor*, because they prayed from the heart." These primitive believers, he tells us, prayed without a monitor, "*sine monitore*:" that is, they required not,

they availed themselves not of the aid of a prayer book.¹

We might adduce additional evidence here to show that at a much later period, the use of liturgies was unknown. We might refer you to the testimony of Bingham, whose learning and whose episcopalianism are alike undisputed. He says, "that for several centuries, every bishop and pastor might adopt what method and words he thought proper, changing it when he pleased." But it is needless to multiply quotations. Whence then or where, some of you may be ready to ask, did this use of liturgies originate? On this point let us quote to you the opinion of the learned Capellus: "Prescribed Liturgies," says he, "were unknown to the apostolic and succeeding ages, and were not introduced till those persecutions ceased, which kept alive the zeal of primitive Christians, and till, through the favour of Christian emperors, the number of Christians increased, but the fervour of true piety was allayed. And then they were gradually introduced for the use of *simple and unlearned ministers*, who through their sloth were unfurnished with gifts, and through their *ignorance*, in danger of venting such unsound notions as subtile hereticks might instill into them." Such is his statement. We will see it to be natural therefore, that at the time of the Reformation many excellent men should have been found willing to retain for a time the use of the liturgies. The clergy were then exceedingly ignorant, and in general would have been incapable of addressing God in public without forms.² So far from that, many of

¹ See Note B.

² See Note C.

them were judged unfit even to preach to the people, and homilies therefore were indited for them as well as prayers. But when, by the revival of letters and religion, ministers were better furnished with abilities and gifts, these homilies were gradually disused. Might not the prayers with advantage have been laid aside likewise?

We have been lately told by an advocate of liturgies in this city, that John Calvin, who, as he justly states, has great weight with Presbyterians, advocated them likewise. He quotes a passage from Calvin's letter to the Protector, dated in 1548, in proof of this assertion. The pith of that passage, in so far as it seems to sanction his theory, is comprised in these words: "So also it is fit that there should be a fixed catechism, a fixed administration of the sacraments, and a public form of prayer." Here our author stops, and, by a strange oversight, omits all notice of the very remarkable context which immediately follows, and by which the meaning that he attempts to fix upon the Reformer's words is greatly modified, if not completely altered. That context may be rendered thus: "But it does not follow from this, (viz., from what he has already stated respecting the expediency of public fixed forms,) that through occasion of that political settlement in the church, the native vigour of the Gospel should languish." "In order that this may not be the case, it is the rather incumbent on you, by all means, to seek out *fit* and able preachers."¹ The meaning of this exhortation from Calvin is obvious, and its deliberate suppression by our author, standing in intimate connexion as it

¹ "Idonei et sonori Buccinatores."

does with the passage he has quoted, we are compelled to designate as unfair and disingenuous. The truth is, these latter sentences turn Calvin's testimony completely against his theory. The great reformer, well knowing the weakness and ignorance of the clergy, and remembering how long the people, now emerging from Popish darkness, had been accustomed to the use of forms, advises the Protector to retain them for a time, but to exert himself to discover able and qualified ministers; implying, that when these were obtained, and every thing brought into a regular channel, these forms might be dispensed with altogether. That this was his opinion seems perfectly certain from a letter which he wrote to John Knox soon after this time, in reply to one from the Scottish reformer, craving his advice respecting the drawing up of a summary of the Book of Common Prayer. In this Calvin states, "that in the English liturgy, he had found many *tolerable fooleries*,"¹ meaning thereby, things which might be tolerated at the beginning of a reformation, but ought afterwards to be removed; but, for his part, he could not understand what those meant who discovered such fondness for Popish dregs."² This letter of Calvin's was read to the people and had a great effect in repressing the keenness of those who would have urged the unlimited use of a liturgy. Accordingly, that one which Knox proceeded to draw up was framed in accordance with these enlightened views. In that liturgy there were some forms of prayer inserted, but it is important to notice that it presented this

¹ 'Tolerabiles ineptias.'

² Calvini Epist. p. 98. Anno 1667.

grand distinction from the English, that the *minister was not required to adhere to them*. He might use them or substitute others of his own for them. At the end of the Directory for the Public Sabbath Service occur these words : “It shall *not be necessarie* for the minister daylie to repeat all these things before mentioned ; but, beginning with *some* manner of confession, to proceed to the sermon, which ended, he either useth the prayer for all estates before mentioned, or else *prayeth as the Spirit of God shall move his heart*, framing the same according to the time and manner which he hath intreated of.”¹ Such, brethren, are the opinions of Calvin, (the sagacious Calvin, as our author terms him,) and Knox. We have dwelt at some length on this point because we consider it important. These venerated reformers were never the advocates of liturgic forms. They tolerated them for a time, out of a wise regard to the exigencies of the age. But they were too well acquainted with the word of God and with the nature of man, to imagine that the desires of the church should throughout all time ascend to Heaven in one unaltering form of supplication.

Having thus seen that Scripture and Christian antiquity are against the use of liturgies and in favour of extemporaneous prayer, we proceed to mention one or two arguments by which Presbyterians are accustomed to vindicate their adoption of the latter form of worship. We shall then notice some of the objections commonly urged against it.

The *first* consideration which we would advance in favour of conceived prayer is, That it leaves op-

¹ Knox's Liturgy, p. 120.—Edin. 1611.

portunity for the *Spirit's working*, and *tends to keep us depending on his aid*. We are taught in Scripture that it is the province of the Holy Spirit to guide and animate the church—not merely to inspire Christians with sincerity of heart, but to direct them both in the matter and in the manner of their petitions. For this reason he is spoken of by the prophet as the “Spirit of supplications,” and an apostle declares that we know not what to pray for as we ought, but that the “Spirit maketh intercession for us,” and “helpeth our infirmities.” It is not to be supposed that his assistance in this respect is limited to the closet. Surely in the sanctuary on the Sabbath, in discharging functions so arduous and important as the Christian ministry involves, the ambassador for Christ is especially privileged to expect it. For this reason Presbyterians deem it their duty to worship God in extemporaneous prayer, and to reject the use of a liturgy. They cannot understand, if it be the sole duty of the minister to read from a printed book a collection of precomposed sentences, what necessity there can be for reliance on the Spirit to assist in regulating the matter or the manner of such worship. They cannot see in this view how liturgies can be vindicated from the charge of *stinting* the Spirit, and of marring the growth of those graces which constant dependence on his aid, habitual exercise of his gifts are calculated to promote in the believer. And here let us quote, in corroboration of these sentiments, the very appropriate remarks of the pious Bishop Wilkins on this subject: “For any one to sit down and satisfy himself with this book prayer, or some prescript form, so

as to go no farther, this were still to remain in his infancy, and not to grow up in his new nature; this would be, as if a man who had once need of *crutches*, should always afterwards make use of them, and so necessitate himself to a *continual impotence*. It is the duty of every Christian to grow and increase in all the parts of Christianity, as well gifts as graces, to exercise and improve every holy gift, and not to stifle any of those abilities wherewith God has endued him. Now how can a man be said to live suitable to these rules, who does not put forth himself in some attempts and endeavours of this kind?"¹

Secondly, We would specify, as another signal advantage of free prayer, that it can be adapted to *the varying states of the church and the wants of individual believers*. In adopting this mode of worship, the ministers of Presbyterian churches can suit themselves to the circumstances of their hearers. They can frame the petitions which they present on the Sabbath with such degree of particularity as may be required, and they can introduce into them as often as they see proper, suitable references to the private or social or public changes that are constantly occurring around them. This is an evident advantage, and it is one of which those who are confined to the use of a fixed liturgy are wholly deprived. Let us suppose a minister who is cramped and limited by forms to be apprised of some melancholy occurrence among his flock—some private grief or domestic calamity—in which he feels the deepest interest and sympathy. On the morning of the succeeding Sabbath his mind may be full of the subject, and the

¹ Gift of Prayer.

hearts of the assembled worshippers may ardently desire that their sympathies with the stricken individual or mourning family should find vent in united petitions to a throne of grace; but, tied down to a form, the minister must go through the usual round of vague and irrelevant supplication; nor can he even distantly allude, in leading the public devotions of the church, to a subject which is perhaps at the moment to the whole church the one of paramount and engrossing interest. Or take, again, the case of public events—national visitations. Some calamitous providence may suddenly take place and scatter desolation over a smiling land. And while the hearts of men are failing them for fear, and their eyes are raised to the throne of heaven for mercy, the commissioned servant of the Most High, it might naturally be expected, should be the fitting organ of their confessions and of their prayers. Yet, if bound to a form of words, such he cannot be. He cannot allude, in offering up the public petitions of the church, to that fearful scourge to which the eyes of all are directed. He dares not, with any particular reference to it, implore the Divine mercy or deprecate the Divine judgments in their behalf. It may be pursuing its desolating course, but he must not travel out of the record before him. And when at length, after tedious arrangements and multiplied consultations, a special prayer suited to the emergency is elaborated and royal licence issued for its adoption, then only is it that the minister of Christ is permitted to relieve the burdened minds of his people and approach with them to the mercy-seat, to put up tardy and now perhaps unseasonable intercessions.¹ We must see, brethren, from

¹ See Note D.

these considerations, that that method of worship which admits of varying supplication is greatly superior to that which rejects it. So obvious indeed is its superiority in the respect we have just mentioned, that episcopalian divines have themselves confessed it. Archdeacon Paley allows that fixed forms of prayer labour in this respect under serious disadvantages, and proposes to obviate them by occasional revisions of the liturgy. Bishop Wilkins, in the book we have already quoted, the "Gift of Prayer," bears a similar testimony to the inconvenience of forms. "How can a man," he asks, "thus suit his desires unto several emergencies? What one says of counsel to be had from book, may be fitly applied to this prayer by book, that it is commonly something flat and dead, floating for the most part *too much in generalities* and *not particular enough for each several occasion*. There is not that life and vigour in it to engage the affections as when it proceeds immediately from the soul itself, and is the natural expression of those particulars whereof we are most sensible."

We shall mention at present but one other argument by which Presbyterians justify the use of extemporaneous prayer; it is this, That such a mode is better calculated than any other *to excite and sustain the attention and interest of the people*. Let us hear the frank admission of Dr. Paley on this point: "It must be confessed that the perpetual repetition of the same form of words produces weariness and inattentiveness in the congregation." Let us hear again Bishop Wilkins, who is an excellent witness, to the same effect: "It should be especially remembered, that in the use of prescript forms to which a man

hath been accustomed, he ought to be narrowly watchful over his own heart for fear of the lip-service and formality which in such cases *we are more especially exposed unto.*" These are candid, and they are important concessions. Who can hesitate to join in them? We know that the human mind requires to be roused and stimulated. It is framed with an inherent love of variety and change. Nothing, our own experience tells us, so speedily dulls and stupifies it as uniformity. This in every other case is acknowledged; it must be the same in the duties of religion. It must operate as powerfully, yea, for obvious reasons, much more powerfully in them than in any thing else. Ought we not then to conform ourselves to this law of our mental nature? The flame of piety but too often burns languishingly even in the heart of God's people; instead of damping it by sameness, ought we not to feed it by variety? That it is damped and chilled and repressed by the monotony of a form of prayer, it is impossible to doubt. The perpetual recurrence of the same sounds and tones, the accustomed transitions from one subject to another, the endless reiteration of the same requests, couched in the same identical phraseology, all this falling, perhaps, in drowsy accents on the tired ear, what can be its tendency but to blunt the apprehension and the feeling, impair the dignity as well as the power of devotion, create a vagueness if not an utter vacuity of thought, and convert religion into a mere bodily service?

Having thus directed your attention to some of the reasons why Presbyterians adopt extemporary prayer in preference to a liturgy in public worship,

we shall now go on to take notice of some of the *more prominent objections urged against their practice.*

The first which we shall mention is, that in extemporaneous supplication the people are *unable to follow the minister or to pray with the understanding.* By being previously acquainted with the prayers read by the officiating clergyman, it is alleged, the people can better weigh and adopt the petitions they embody. And in fact, without this expedient, it has been said, there can be no such thing as congregational prayer at all. This sentiment has been advanced by high authority. The present protestant Archbishop of Dublin, in his late letter interdicting the social prayer-meetings of his clergy, has these remarkable words: "Our Lord's especial blessing and favourable reception of petitions are bestowed on those who solemnly and deliberately agree respecting the petitions to be offered up, which is plainly impossible, in most cases at least, if the hearers (petitioners they cannot properly be called) have to learn what the prayer is at the moment of its being uttered." A hard sentence this. An ungracious verdict. And pronounced respecting whom? Every Presbyterian and independent worshipping assembly throughout christendom. The most pious body of Christians of either of those denominations who meet or ever have met to worship God, whose devotions have been led by such "giant Israels" as an Owen or a Baxter, a Doddridge or a Henry, a Chalmers or a Hall—of these it is affirmed by a Protestant dignitary, in the nineteenth century, that prayer may be uttered *in* them but cannot be made *by* them—the unfortunate worshippers in such solemn assemblies are *hearers*

only, not *petitioners*. And why, forsooth? Because they have not all had a previous agreement about the sentiments to be advanced nor received from the civil authorities of the land a schedule of the very words in which they are to be clothed! Can any thing be conceived more preposterous than this, more insulting to the intelligence of an enlightened community?¹

But, in truth, the assumption that previous knowledge of the prayers offered in public by the minister is indispensable to enable us to understand and feel them, is shown to be baseless both by reason and experience. Reason shows us that this objection would apply as forcibly to preaching as to prayer. It would require not only that the sermons delivered should be precomposed, but that all the people should previously inspect them and agree to them. It is somewhat singular that Bishop Wilkins, in his "Gift of Prayer," in this very way meets and disposes of the objection: "As a man," he says, "may in his judgment assent to any Divine truth delivered in a sermon which he never heard before, so may he join in his affections to any holy desire in a prayer which he never heard before." To this every one can assent from his own experience. Who fails to accompany the preacher in his discourse, to join with him in the sentiments which he delivers, to yield himself up to the emotions which he excites? We cannot but see that the argument we are noticing, if it prove any thing would prove too much. It would show, not only that there should be forms of prayer, but also that there should be forms of preaching—a

¹ See Note E.

principle for which, it is presumed, none would be willing to contend.

It has been urged as another objection against extemporary prayer, that it is *an unsafe method of conducting the public devotions of the church*. The author of *Sermons on the Church* has dwelt much on this point. He has instanced the case of an irreligious minister conducting the services of the sanctuary. He has shown with much ability and force of illustration, how incapable such a man must necessarily be of edifying God's people. But we would ask, how stands the case supposing a similar evil to occur in an episcopal congregation? Suppose that the minister stately officiating there is a man "unspiritual" in heart. Is the case bettered on this hypothesis? Will the mere presence of a liturgy secure edification to the church? He reads over in a frigid and impassive tone, a form of words breathing the sublimest piety. He gives utterance to thoughts many of them conceived in the loftiest spirit of devotion, and which could fall suitably only from the lips of one who had "tasted that the Lord is gracious." In what way, we ask, can such a service affect the people? Can they be edified by the solemn farce that they see enacted before them? Can their souls be refreshed by hearing a number of devotional sentences, rehearsed over by some fashionable worldling, who appears before them in the garb of a Christian minister, but who, they are inwardly convinced, has never been sent by Christ, who does not feel the power of what he utters, and who, it may be, has not even the decency to *seem* to feel it? On the contrary, is such a scene calculated to awaken any

thing but unmingled dissatisfaction and disgust? How revolting the moral contrast presented? It would argue an ignorance of the structure of the human mind, to suppose that any forms of prayer, however admirable, could, in such circumstances, sustain or animate devotion.

But extemporary prayer is unsafe, it is alleged, not only in such cases as we have just supposed, but also because of its liability to be clothed in *unsuitable and unedifying* language. "Liturgies," says Dr. Whately, "are more likely to be judiciously framed than extemporary effusions." The writer of *Sermons on the Church* also insists much on this point. He represents poverty of language and want of appositeness of expression in the pulpit as embarrassing the minds of a congregation and chilling the fervency of its devotion. Now we are very ready to grant that in an exercise so important as public prayer, not only should the thoughts be carefully premeditated, but the words employed few and well chosen. It is desirable that they should perspicuously express the devout aspirations of the church. But beyond this, we see not that any thing is required. We have no sympathy with the extravagant eulogies which Churchmen and others have lavished on the Liturgy, on account of the beauty of its style and the felicity of its diction. These are not the things that the King of Zion looks to. He is a Spirit, and if they that worship him, worship him in spirit, he is indifferent alike to the logic and to the language of their supplications. He cares not when he looks down on the inward wrestlings of awakened spirits, though they should pour out their emotions

in somewhat "rugged masses" before him, nor have the fervent pleadings of the contrite ever failed of acceptance at his throne, because no pains were taken to adjust the sentiments or chisel the expressions.

The truth is, prayer is too lofty and spiritualized an exercise to permit, much less demand, the niceties of composition. In the words of the great English moralist: "the topics of Christian devotion are few and universally known; they are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fancy, too majestic for ornament. The penitent spirit, trembling in the presence of its Judge, is not at leisure for cadences or epithets." Experience, my brethren, seals the truth of these remarks. It convinces us that there is no force in the objection, that in free prayer ministers are, (generally speaking) in danger of using loose and unedifying language. Thousands of congregations have, in all ages, borne testimony to the spiritual comfort they have derived from the conceived addresses of faithful, though perhaps, moderately gifted pastors. It is the dictate of reason that when men are in earnest they will seldom fail to give fluent expression to their thoughts. Let the servant of Christ, having given himself to previous meditation, come before his Master on the Sabbath, realizing his presence and relying on his aid, and just as surely as the Divine Spirit is a Spirit of truth, will he be enabled to clothe his sentiments in fitting words, and present aright the requests of his people before God. It has been alleged further, in proof of the advantage of a liturgy, and of its great superiority to extemporary prayer, that it is the *Cementer* of the

Church. Of course, it is implied in this that those churches that adopt the latter mode of worship are liable, on that very account, to be distracted and dis-united. The writer on the Church breaks out into a strain of fervid declamation on this subject, and tells us that the Christian must feel greatly cheered and elevated by the thought that so many multitudes, throughout Britain, and throughout the world, are repeating over every Sabbath morning, from the Prayer Book, the same words which he is engaged in repeating. We cannot but regard this as a very strange argument. We are well aware that its force and conclusiveness would be fully appreciated at Rome. The Romish Church has ordained the celebration of the Mass in Latin, that she might thus secure an unbroken sameness and uniformity. Why does not our author carry out his reasoning thus far, and having got a good principle go through with it? But in truth we cannot understand how the Common Prayer Book can be, as he calls it, "*The grand Cementer of the Church.*" Does he mean the universal church, the Bride of Christ? That cannot be, for he well knows that its members are knit together not by humanly-contrived and humanly-imposed prayer books, but by the bonds of their common faith. By "The Church" therefore he must evidently mean here, as elsewhere, the Prelatic Church, and if this be his idea, we can then see some point in his declamation, though we are very far from admitting the validity of his reasoning. We are at a loss to see how even the members of the English Church can, in any scriptural sense, be cemented together by the consciousness, that each

returning Sabbath morning, though geographically severed, they are in spirit united, in meditating on the Book of Common Prayer. We should have thought that when they called to mind the origin and history of that compilation, the many distractions and confusions and persecutions that it has been the means of engendering in Christendom, the strange doctrines and antiquated rites which it embodies, and the spiritual tyranny with which these are bound on men's consciences, and all excluded from the Church's pale who will not bend beneath the yoke; we should have feared that when all this was recollected, the Prayer Book, so far from proving a "cement of the soul," even to Episcopalians, might have had a tendency very much the reverse. It cannot be necessary for us to spend time in exposing the futility of such an argument as this.

We come now to the last objection, which we shall at present notice as brought against the use of free prayer in public worship. We are informed that it *has a tendency to betray the Church into error*. A liturgy, says the author of "Sermons on the Church," is a bulwark against the incursions of heresy. "It is a test and criterion of the doctrines of ministers—if they inculcate error they are met and contradicted on the spot." The great mistake, he tells us, of Dissenters (as he calls them) is, that they "rely on the pulpit," on the "expected continuance of ministerial orthodoxy," as "the grand conservative resource" against heresy.¹ And he mentions a great many churches, both in America

¹ Sermons on Church, pp. 104, 106.

and England,¹ and among others, the Synod of Ulster in this country, which have become greatly polluted with error, because they fell into this sad mistake. Now we have to reply, in the first place, that the Orthodox Reformed Churches have not fallen into this mistake, as he imagines; it must be satisfactory for him to learn that they do not rely too far on the "expected continuance of ministerial orthodoxy," and that the fashionable theory, of which he speaks, is not theirs, that preaching is the "grand conservative resource" against heresy. Has he forgotten that they have their standards, their Confessions of Faith? These are in the hands of their people. By these their humblest members can test both the preaching and the praying of their ministers. And what is more, if they discover them to be unsound and heretical in either, they can appeal to church courts and have them driven from amongst them. And let us see if we will not find proofs, even in Britain, that this system works well. Let us look at the Church of Scotland. She has her Confession, she is unblessed with a liturgy, yet where is there a church on earth whose doctrinal purity is greater? Look at the Covenanting, and Secession Churches in Ulster. Nobly have they maintained the truth of God in its integrity, yet they are still strangely insensible to the benefits of liturgic forms. Look even to the Synod of Ulster. While that church was unfaithful to her Lord, and had allowed her standards to fall into disuse; error, it is admitted, crept into and devastated her borders. But fearless men arose within her to "contend for the faith," and uplift

¹ See Note F.

again her ancient testimony, and now, having shaken off the incubus that prostrated her energies, she is walking forth over the land with brightening vision and buoyant tread, having favour with her Lord, and going forth to his help against the embattled hosts of the mighty. Her past redemption from error she achieved, her present steadfastness in the truth she maintains, and all without the aid of a liturgy. How? By the blessing of God on the means she used, not the "conservative resource" of preaching merely, but the resumption of her ancient formularies, and the exercise of a discipline which the Presbyterianism of her government enabled her to wield.

But it may now be asked, has the liturgy of the Church of England, this bulwark against heresy, the want of which it is more than insinuated permits error to desolate other churches; has it asserted in this very particular its vaunted claim to superiority? Let us look to the past history of that church. Have no stains of error sullied her lawn-like purity? Are there no blots on her spiritual scutcheon? Our author maintains that she is an apostolical church, and that a liturgy was used in her from the very first ages of Christianity. I ask him, then, how does he account for the origin and perpetuation of Romish error and superstition? How is it, that with this "grand conservative resource," in constant and active operation, there could have been so fearful a falling away? How is it that liturgies have not shielded Christendom from the spiritual abominations of the Papacy? Leaving, however, the past, let us turn

to the present. Let us look at Oxford at the present day. There we behold a number of learned divines, reared up in the very bosom of the Church of England, yet all but openly abandoning the faith of Christ. There we find ministers of the Gospel who bewail their Protestantism, and "grieve over the apostacy of the Reformation." There we see the Puseys, the Froudes, and the Kebles of the day, renouncing the leading doctrines of the Cross, stretching out their arms to embrace the withered Romish harlot, and flinging contumely and rebuke on the purest churches of the land. Who has not heard of the flagrant heresies which these semi-popish ecclesiastics have lately broached before astounded Christendom? Who has not heard of their insidious efforts again to pollute the Church with some of the worst of Romish errors? Who has not heard of the spirit of the men who have called Rome a sister and Scotland a Samaria? How is it then that liturgies form a bulwark against the incursions of error? Have not these men their liturgy? Has it kept them steadfast in the faith? Ah! but interposes the author of *Sermons on the Church*, "these are but individuals;" no church is perfect. We ask, in reply, what general and decided testimony has been borne against these errors? Have the dignitaries of the Protestant hierarchy of England and Ireland met together in solemn assembly, "to consider of this matter"? Have they taken instant and effectual measures to wipe away this foul stain; to call to account before them these traducers of the Reformed religion, to abjure the Popery of the Oxford ecclesiastics? No, brethren, this hath not been done. How then shall

it be known whether the errors that have sprung up are the errors of a few insignificant bigots alone, or are widely leavening the church which has not testified against them?

And if, it is certain that there are thus a considerable number of spiritual guides in the episcopal church tainted with these dangerous opinions, it may be asked, how does a fixed form of public prayer protect the people to whom they minister? The people indeed may, by listening to its orthodox petitions, and comparing these with the sermon that follows, perceive that their pastor is feeding them with husks instead of bread; but what remedy have they within their reach? Here the writer on the Church exclaims, "Oh we exult in the thought that in it," (that is in the prayer-book,) "*our* people possess something which leaves *them* not at the mercy of their teacher, and that if in the course of the Sabbath ministrations, they should hear things unlike the truth which they thought their bibles taught them, they have it in their power"—— to do what? To demand an investigation? To ensure a dismissal? Oh! no. What power have they then? Hear it described by one who knows it well. "They have it in their power *to turn to the expressed opinions of the church, and to become fortified in their repugnance to statements so much at variance with them.*"¹ And this is the power of the laity of the Church of England! They may have placed over them a minister who holds and teaches doctrines "contrary to God's word written," an Arminian, an Arian, a Socinian, a Puseyite; they may see, every Sabbath,

¹ Sermons on the Church, p. 107.

a flat contradiction between the prayers of the morning and the sermon in the afternoon; they may be shocked at the hideous contrast, but what can they do to avert the evil? They dare not move a finger in the matter; they are tied hand and foot beneath the wheels of prelacy, and all the power that prelacy has left them is this, the power of brooding over their spiritual woes, and sighing for the desolation of the Church of England!—or, as it is somewhat vaguely expressed by one of their own teachers, the power “of turning to the expressed opinions of their church, and becoming fortified in their repugnance to statements so much at variance with them.” It is plain, brethren, both from reason and from fact, that this objection to extemporaneous prayer, that it leaves the church open to the encroachments of error, is totally unfounded.

On reviewing the whole subject, we believe that the reflecting Christian will be ready to admit that our presbyterian practice of conducting this department of public worship is, of all others, fraught with the most numerous and the most important advantages. We have seen that Revelation, Christian antiquity, and some of the plainest dictates of reason testify in its favour, and against the use of precomposed and unchanging forms. Therefore, though these are insisted on in the episcopal church, though adherence to the addresses which civil rulers have appointed is made an indispensable term of communion within her pale, yet Presbyterians, standing fast in their Christian liberty, believe that they may totally dispense with their use, and yet “worship God in spirit and in truth.”

I proceed now to offer some remarks on the administration of Christ's sacraments; and first, with respect to the ordinance of *Baptism*. It is unnecessary to describe to you the manner in which this rite is celebrated by Presbyterians, or to enter into any lengthened exposition of the opinions which they hold respecting its nature. They view it as a holy ordinance, which is to be administered to all who profess their faith in Christ, or to the infants of those who are members of his church; and they believe that when, in obedience to Christ's command, water is poured upon the child by the minister in the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is then received into the bosom of the visible church, and dedicated for ever to the Redeemer's service. They hold that the child is entitled to baptism on the ground of the professed faith of its parents; and that by one or both of them it ought, in all cases, to be presented. They consider moreover, that though baptism is an institution of Christ, which cannot without guilt be neglected, yet they have no warrant from his word to affirm that through the want of it, a child dying unbaptised, perishes everlastingly.

This is a summary of the opinions entertained by Presbyterians respecting this important sacrament of the New Testament. These opinions are embodied in the standards of our church. We believe that they are perfectly in accordance with the teaching of the word of God; and while we maintain this, we feel bound by a regard to the interests of truth, to declare our solemn conviction that several of the tenets of the Church of England with regard to this

ordinance, both as to its nature and to the mode of its celebration, are utterly at variance with the teaching of the Bible. With reference to its *nature*, in the first place, we have to remind you that it is a common, and we believe a well-founded objection, to the doctrine of that church, that *it maintains baptism to be regeneration*. The author of "Sermons on the Church" protests against the unwarrantableness of this charge. He asserts that there is no ground for it whatever. He refers to the 27th Article of his church, which affirms "that baptism is a *sign* of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an *instrument*, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church." Now, we cannot tell but that this quotation which we have given with our author's own Italics, may completely exculpate his church from the sin of teaching the gross heresy referred to. All we can say is, that we can produce extracts from the Book of Common Prayer, (the book best known to the great mass of the people,) which, if there be any meaning in language, distinctly prove the contrary. Let us refer to one or two of these. Let us read the following words in one of the prayers which the priest is enjoined to offer up immediately after the child has been baptised: "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is *regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto God for these benefits, and make our prayer to him that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning." We put it to any man of common sense, who understands the English language, and is ever so slightly acquainted with the Gospel of

Christ, whether there could be a plainer or stronger affirmation that the child is regenerated the moment it is baptised? Again, after a repetition of the Lord's prayer, (for what purpose introduced in this particular place the framers of the Liturgy best can tell,) we find the priest is commanded to pray as follows: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased *thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit*, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church." And then immediately after the church is made to beseech God that as "he (the child,) *is made partaker of the death of his Son*, he also may be of his resurrection." Is it necessary to ask what is the purport of all this? Surely it cannot be so. Surely if we are allowed the use of our senses, if we are supposed to be capable of expounding a paragraph of English, if we have not surrendered up our reason and our judgment into the keeping of spiritual superiors, we can no more doubt that this teaches baptism to be regeneration than we can doubt that two and two are four.

We might here adduce the testimony of eminent and learned divines of the episcopal church proving beyond a question that this gross error (which we cannot but regard the preceding extracts from the Prayer Book as teaching,) they also firmly held and openly maintained.¹ Without insisting on these, let us just enquire how do those who (like the author of "Sermons on the Church"), deny that any such interpretation can be put on these passages, endeavour to extricate the Church from the difficulty.

¹ See Note G.

Their usual plea is that which he has adopted. They send us to the Articles, in one of which they allege the Church distinctly asserts that baptism is only a sign of regeneration, and not by any means equivalent to regeneration itself. And yet, if this be the case, is not the dilemma in which the Church is placed as great as ever? Is not her Service-book thus shown to be indeed a most consistent and harmonious directory? We can suppose a poor and plain man going to one of her ministers, and saying, "Sir, I am desirous that my child should be baptised; I pray you to instruct me in the nature of that holy ordinance. Does it really regenerate, and thus secure the salvation of my child? The minister addresses him: Sir, I assure you, you are entirely mistaken. The 27th Article of our church distinctly tells you that it is only the sign, and not by any means the reality. The man responds: Sir, I am greatly disposed to believe all that you teach; I have been frequently and very forcibly exhorted to put implicit faith in the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles; but here is what perplexes me. In my Book of Common Prayer, which I have been taught to revere and value next to my Bible, I find that when a child is publicly baptised, the minister returns thanks to God that it hath pleased him to regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit; and in the form for private baptism again, I read that the minister certifies (with regard to a child which hath been already duly baptised) that, 'being born in original sin and in the wrath of God, it is now, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God and heirs of everlasting life.' Which then,

sir, of these am I to put faith in? I am in a strait betwixt two. If the Article be right, my Common Prayer Book is a false teacher: if the Common Prayer Book be right, the Article must inculcate a heresy. How shall I decide? I am puzzled and confounded. I am a father, anxious for the salvation of my child, and my mind is harassed with distracting doubts. Deliver me from these, I beseech you; rescue me from the entanglements of this incomprehensible code." Such, brethren, is a simple illustration of the difficulties in which the Church of England must needs be placed by the conflicting testimony of her formularies on this subject.

I proceed now to advert to one or two objectionable usages discoverable *in her manner of celebrating the ordinance of baptism*. And here, first, I shall make some remarks on the appointment of sponsors. A reverend speaker at a late meeting of episcopal clergy, calls this "that beautiful arrangement of our Church." Let us see what claim it has to his eulogies. It may scarcely be necessary to premise that Presbyterians do not object to sponsors in cases of absolute necessity. This was, in truth, the sole ground on which they were at first introduced. It is never pretended by any respectable authority that they were even so much as thought of in the primitive apostolic church. Justin Martyr, who lived towards the close of the second century, and who particularly describes the mode of baptism in his day, makes no mention of them. The first Christian writer who takes the slightest notice of them is Augustine, who flourished in the end of the fourth century; he tells us on what occasion they were admitted.

“Sometimes, says he, when the parents are dead the infants are baptised, being offered by any who can afford to show this compassion to them. And sometimes infants whom their parents have cruelly exposed, are taken up by holy virgins, and offered to baptism by them who have no children of their own.” These are Augustine’s words. So plain and undeniable is their testimony, that Dr. Wall, an eminent Episcopalian, is forced to make this remarkable admission: “Here we see the ordinary use then was *for parents to answer for the children*; but yet that it was not counted so necessary as that a child could not be baptised without it.” So much for the antiquity of this rite and the cause of its original introduction. Were the custom practised for similar reasons now, Presbyterians would never quarrel with its adoption. But the Church of England, departing from this ancient use of it, has established it as an invariable and universal rule that on all occasions sponsors, and not the parents, shall present the child for baptism. In her 29th Canon it is expressly enacted that *no parent shall be urged to be present at his child’s baptism*, nor be admitted to answer as godfather for his own child.” What a strange, what an inconceivably strange and unaccountable decree! Hear it, fathers! ye who have learned from a holy apostle that it is your duty to “train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!” Hear it, mothers! whose maternal hearts yearn towards your little ones, and convince you that as none can have so deep and tender an interest in their welfare, so none can be so fit to dedicate them in baptism to God! Hear it reason and common sense, the Church of England

proclaims to all within her pale, "no parent shall be urged to be present at his child's baptism, nor be admitted to answer as godfather for his own child!"

Let us now mark some of the absurd and injurious consequences that spring from this enactment. The Scripture teaches that every infant is received to baptism solely in right of the professed faith of its parents. The sponsorial arrangement of the Church of England proceeds on the total denial of this great principle, receiving the child to baptism on its own faith and its own promise, uttered by its sureties, well knowing, at the same time, that it can neither believe nor promise, any more than the font at which it is baptised. The Scripture teaches, again, that parents are bound to train up their offspring in the fear of God, that in baptism they solemnly engage to do this, in order that in after life, it may be brought to fear and serve that great Being to whom it is then for ever dedicated. The practice of the Church of England permits them to have nothing at all to say in the matter; and thus, so far as it is concerned, encourages them in the neglect of parental obligations. Finally, the Scriptures never give us the least hint of any person having a deeper interest in, or more duties to perform towards children than their own parents. The Church of England, on the contrary, receives other persons to appear in the parents' stead, to take upon them a most solemn trust, and solemnly to promise before God and the church to perform what few of them ever do perform, ever intend to perform, or perhaps are ever capable of performing. Can any thing be conceived more utterly preposterous than such a ceremonial as this?

But say the eulogists of the Church Established, it is "our beautiful sponsorial arrangement," and they take pains to show how admirably adapted it is to the promotion of youthful piety, and to the advancement of religion generally. We would just ask, if this be the case, why did not Christ appoint it? Why did not his apostles leave some hint of it on record? Is it not extraordinary that, if this institution be indeed so beneficial in its consequences, the Saviour and his apostles never once thought of it, but left it to be discovered by subsequent, and it would seem, superior sagacity? My brethren, the whole thing is an unscriptural and unreasonable "commandment of men." In its existence, as part of the ritual of a worshipping society, I believe it to be most pernicious in its tendency; and in its being set forth as a judicious and salutary arrangement, there is a manifest impeachment of Christ's wisdom as the Lawgiver of the church.

We would briefly advert to one other unscriptural usage which the Church of England has adopted in her celebration of the ordinance of baptism; we refer to her enjoining *the sign of the cross*. The writer of the "Sermons on the Church" introduces this subject with some very testy references to the ungracious criticisms usually passed on it. He is alike astonished and grieved at the perverse taste that can see anything to object to in this hallowed ceremonial. He says, "We press forward to the defence of this usage." And whither does he press with such commendable ardour? To the law and to the testimony? To a body of Scripture authority unquestioned and unquestionable? Hear him: "We press

forward to the defence of this usage. In examining the materials for this, it is consolatory to know that we have upon our side the practice of the Church from almost apostolic days. We have followed no novel invention, but one which has been sanctioned by the most faithful in the times of primitive Christianity.”¹ Here he distinctly confesses it to be an *invention*, (it is his own word,) and what is his consolation? It is this—that he has not one single text in the Bible to warrant this usage, that he has not one atom of evidence in the New Testament to support it, but that he can hunt out some dubious traces of it in a dark and corrupted age of the church and amid the uncertain writings of the fathers! Truly, a disputant who is so easily consoled, need feel but little uneasiness at the strictures that are made upon his system.

But if this ceremony be unsanctioned by the inspired record, we recur to the old question, What right has the Church of England to ordain it? What right has she to require the officiating minister to say when a child is presented to baptism, “We receive this child into the congregation of Christ’s flock, and do sign it with the sign of the cross”? She may tell us that it is a rite of great antiquity—a most significant and impressive ceremonial. I answer, so, for aught I know, may be the other ceremonials of the oil, the salt, and the spittle, which the Church of Rome has added to Christ’s holy ordinance. There can be no reasons urged for the use of the one which are not valid for the adoption of the other. But, say the advocates of the episcopal church, you cannot

¹ Sermons on the Church, page 167.

fairly object to this rite, for we do not regard it as essential. "The sacrament of baptism is perfect without it." Now mark, brethren, the inference that follows, if in her estimation it be indeed not essential. In what an aspect does this place the English Establishment before us? Here has she been for centuries trampling down the consciences of Christ's people, corrupting the simplicity of one of his holy institutions, erecting a term of communion which the Saviour never once thought of, denying to multitudes admission to an ordinance which Jesus intended for them and to which Jesus would have received them—and all for what? That she might retain in her liturgy a miserable figment of antiquity, that she might not be obliged to expunge from her service book one of her "commandments of men"!

We cannot but regard the language used in the formularies of the Church of England respecting this signing with the cross in baptism, as being calculated to lead into the grossest error. From the manner in which this rite is there spoken of, and the purpose which it is there represented as being designed to serve, we cannot see how this church can be vindicated from the charge of *adding a new sacrament to those which Christ has appointed*. We would call your attention to this point. Let us ask what is the use of baptism? We may state here that there are three principal objects which it serves: it is the sign to us of God's favour; it binds us to his service; and it is the badge of our discipleship. Now what are the uses for which the English Church has appointed the sign of the cross? In the thirtieth canon it is written, "The Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the

apostle, did honour the name of the cross so far that under it he comprehended not only Christ crucified, but the effect and merit of his death, and all the comforts, fruits, and promises that we receive thereby." This is one reason, then, we are led to infer, why they appointed the sign of the cross. The language seems to imply that it is significant of God's favour to us through Christ. But further: another end that it serves is to bind us to Christ's service, to perform the duties of the holy covenant. For we read further on in the same Canon, that it is a rite, "*whereby the infant is dedicated to the service of him that died upon the cross, and bound manfully to confess the faith of Christ, and fight under his banner to his life's end.*" That is, when the episcopal minister marks the sign of the cross on the child's forehead, it is then dedicated to the Lord. In this, again, it performs exactly the same office as baptism. Once more: this signing with the cross is described as a mark of discipleship. For it is written again in the thirtieth Canon that the Church of England accounts it "a lawful and honourable badge." That is, by being crossed by a minister of the established church, we are made to wear the livery of Christ and to be recognised as his servants. Thus, to all intents and purposes, this signing with the cross seems to be made by the episcopal church, if we may judge from the language of her used formularies, as much a distinct sacrament as any thing set up by mere human authority can be. By her ecclesiastical enactments she declares, that this fingering of the priest on the forehead of a child is a sign of the fruits and comforts of Christ's death, a means whereby it is dedicated to his

service, and a badge of its profession. Now all this the Scriptures teach, baptism alone was ordained to signify to the seed of believers. What right, then, has the English Church—what right has any church on earth to tamper with or add to the Lord's holy institution? What right has any church to rake up from the dust of the dark ages an antiquated ceremony and erect it before the people for sacramental uses, and make it to instruct them in the nature and bind them to the duties of God's holy covenant? What an instance is this of ecclesiastical presumption! The unreflecting professor may see nothing in this ceremony but a trifling deviation from accustomed forms; the instructed Christian repudiates it as an audacious infringement of the prerogative of Christ.

Before quitting this point, we would observe, that though we are far from supposing that the author of "Sermons on the Church" understands the signing with the cross in the sense, or uses it for the ends that have been just described, yet we must affirm, that, in attempting in his book to vindicate this ceremony of his church, he has used language exceedingly reprehensible. He says, "It is ceremony with which are linked impressive and momentous truths."¹ We ask, what are they? where are they recorded? He says, "that with the thought of it would come over the mind touching associations and solemn recollections which might stablish the heart in a moment of doubt or timidity." Is it not melancholy thus to see a minister of the Gospel representing the thought of an

¹ Sermons, page 169.:

unscriptural and superstitious rite, as giving even momentary stability to the heart of the believer? But he goes farther still: "Who," says he, "that has felt the magic power which the simple deed of breaking the bread at the communion table of the Lord has, of taking the recollections back to Calvary, will undervalue a ceremony which, allowable in itself, contains under it the inculcation of a duty or the elements of a doctrine?" We ask, What duty does signing with the cross inculcate? We had thought there were no duties incumbent on the liege-men of Christ but those which their Master had enjoined. Of what doctrine does it present the elements? It cannot be any of the doctrines contained in the Bible; for the Bible knows nothing of it. And what shall we say of the implied analogy introduced between this rite and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? What shall be said of the one being likened to the other in its tendency to recal truth and animate to duty? What conception shall we form of the reverence for Scripture displayed in this most preposterous comparison? What! because the sacramental supper of the Lord, the memorials of a Redeemer's sufferings and a Redeemer's love, because this hallowed feast is made the means, by Divine grace, to enlighten and quicken and comfort the believer, therefore, it is implied, we should value a ceremony which is unscriptural in its origin and unmeaning in its nature, which superstition has foisted on the church, and which should long ere this have been swept out as rubbish from the temple of God!

One cannot but marvel at the anxiety which this writer displays for the vindication of this ceremony,

when we bear in mind that its expulsion from the Service-book of the Church has been repeatedly attempted by the best and wisest of her sons. Does he forget that in the year 1562, in the reign of Elizabeth, a great number of the most learned bishops of the English Church besought the Convocation that some of the obnoxious rites, ordained by the Act of Uniformity, might be abolished, and among others, the sign of the cross, in baptism, *as tending to superstition*? Does he not know that this most moderate prayer was rejected by the Convocation by a majority of one vote, and that a proxy; and thus, *by one single vote, of one who was not even present to hear the debates*, it was decided that there should be no alteration in these conscience-grieving ceremonies, but that they should remain fast and firm as laws of Medes and Persians? Is he not aware, further, that in the reign of William III, that illustrious king wished to introduce a bill of Comprehension to reform the Liturgy and Canons, and in this, (the drawing up of which, he entrusted to thirty bishops and other clergy) one of the rites to be abolished or no longer insisted on was, the sign of the cross in baptism if any scrupled to receive it? And yet this bill, proposing six hundred alterations in the Service-book of the Church of England, and approved of by her most learned and holy ministers, her Burnets, her Tillotsons, her Stillingfleets, and her Patricks, this enlightened and liberal effort was also baffled, and consequently the signing with the sign of the cross remains to this day, to blot and disfigure her celebration of an ordinance of Christ. When we think of these things,

brethren, is it not amazing to find a minister of that church in this, the Nineteenth Century, still attempting to vindicate this absurdity? “The men, says he, of ancient and perhaps purer times did not undervalue it.” Purer times! What times? We have seen that he cannot refer to the times of Elizabeth; and William. Purer times! Would he send us back farther to that age when Popery reigned over the mind of Europe, and made the “commandments of God of none effect by her traditions”?

We proceed to make a few observations on the other ordinance of the New Testament, the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. As the opinions held by Presbyterians respecting its nature must be perfectly familiar to you, we shall at present confine our remarks to the mode of its celebration. You are aware that the posture in which this feast is partaken of by Episcopalians differs from that to which you are accustomed, that while other churches almost invariably use the sitting posture, kneeling is universally practised in the Church of England. Nor might we deem this a matter of much importance, or demanding from us much notice or censure, were it not that that Church has authoritatively *imposed the attitude*. She has made it a term of fellowship. For in the 27th Canon it is enacted that “the minister shall never wittingly dispense the Sacrament to any but to such as kneel.” So that the most godly Christian, supposing even that he were a member of the Church of England, and that he insisted on partaking of this ordinance sitting, would for that reason, and for that reason alone, be ex-

cluded from the table of his Lord. It may be asked, would an apostle have excluded him for that reason? We will thus see from the simple fact that kneeling is imposed by the episcopal church, that she must attach great importance to the adoption of this attitude. She must regard it as somehow indispensable to the right observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Of course, she must greatly condemn the posture used by other churches. It is needful for us therefore to vindicate *our practice* in this matter, or show that there is no warrant or authority for that of kneeling, and consequently, that the guilt of schism, with which we are so often charged, rests not with us, but with that church which has erected this and other unscriptural ceremonies as terms of ecclesiastical communion.

The writer of "Sermons on the Church" seems to intimate that the Church of England has enjoined a kneeling posture, because it is more indicative of reverence for the ordinance than a sitting one. He tells us that "the Lord's Supper is the *highest* ordinance in the Church of Jesus." The Bible on the contrary, teaches that Baptism is perfectly on a level with it in all the elements of solemnity, importance, and obligation. He asks, "Is it wonderful that our church, expecting hallowed and humbled frames in her children, anticipating that many a worshipper would most naturally bend the knee when the soul was prostrate, should enjoin a posture so congenial?"¹ That is, kneeling, we are left to infer, has been imposed by the Church of England because she would thus exhibit her profounder reverence for this holy

¹ Sermons, p. 157.

ordinance. We observe that she can with but an indifferent grace advance this plea. What evidence does her past history present of any superior respect for its sacredness? When we think of the manner in which she has been wont to admit persons to the eucharist, when we call to mind how frequently and as a matter of course, notorious profligates have received it from her, simply as a qualification for office, we will be constrained to feel that no church has so grievously profaned this holy ordinance.

We have to observe, however, that this author's vindicating of the kneeling posture from the idea that it shows a deeper reverence, proceeds on a misconception of the nature and design of the Sacrament of the Supper. It is a feast of love. It is intended to symbolize the endearing fellowship which believers have with their Divine Master, and with each other. Though to be observed with humility, as every religious duty ought, yet unquestionably, the chief and pervading feeling ought to be one of joy and thankfulness. Kneeling, therefore, on such an occasion, is incongruous and unsuitable. It has been well asked, "In what nation is it customary to kneel at banquets? Where do men eat and drink upon their knees?" Sitting, or what is called a table posture, we will at once perceive, is a preferable attitude, if it were only from a consideration of the very nature of the ordinance itself.

But further, the sitting posture is that which Jesus Christ used and sanctioned. He and his apostles sat together when this solemn rite was instituted. On what grounds, then, would Episcopa-

lians persuade us to imitate their example, and deviate from that set us by our Divine Master? The author whom we have been quoting has recourse to an extraordinary mode of reasoning on this point. He tells us that Christ departed from the ancient mode of celebrating the paschal festival. The attitude originally prescribed to Israel in observing it was that of standing. Christ, it is admitted, partook of it sitting. Therefore, says this writer, "*for our nonconformity with the conduct of our Master, (which we deny was intended in this case to be a binding pattern,) we plead his nonconformity to the rule and ancient usage of Israel.*"¹ That is, because Christ thought proper to abrogate a Jewish rite, both in its *matter* and *manner* of observance, and replace it with one better adapted in both respects to the genius of the Gospel church; therefore, Episcopalians are at liberty to tamper with his holy institutions! Because the Anointed Lawgiver of Zion changed, for wise and obvious reasons, the posture at the paschal feast, from standing to sitting; therefore a body of fallible men may compel his people for *no reason at all*, but *in open defiance of the Lord's example*, invariably to kneel at the Sacrament of the Supper! Surely we will see that this reasoning is, to say the least of it, highly unwarrantable. Surely the writer who has employed it must have done so inadvertently; he must see, on reflection, that it would involve consequences which he would shudder to contemplate.

One other reason which Presbyterians would advance for adhering to the sitting posture, and which

¹ Sermons, p. 163.

in their opinion forms an insuperable objection to the custom of kneeling is, that the latter has been prostituted to idolatry. The writer of the "Sermons" states that this custom is as old as the seventh, perhaps the third century. He has furnished no proof however of his assertion. And even supposing it admitted that it was introduced before the dogma of transubstantiation arose, yet we presume it will not be denied that the Romish Church adopted and employs it to signify her adoration of the real presence in the Eucharist. But this author reminds us that the Church of England has carefully explained her use of it, and guarded it from being misinterpreted, by a rubric in which it is expressly declared that "no adoration is intended." He seems to think that great credit is due to his church for thus thoughtfully providing against the possibility of misconception in this matter. He represents the author of "The Protestant Dissenter's Catechism," and along with him even Dr. Doddridge, as being destitute of "candour and even of common honesty," for having, in their strictures on the Church's ceremonies, omitted to notice this explanation with which she has accompanied them. "The Church of England, says he, foreseeing the use which her enemies would be willing to make of her injunctions, has placed upon record the reasons which induced her to make them, and has put the world in possession of her views and opinions in this matter."¹ It may be well for us here then to enquire into the origin and history of this rubric that we may see what amount of praise the Church of England may fairly claim for its in-

¹ Sermon, p. 158.

sersion in her formularies. Now it is a historical fact that it was first introduced in the year 1552. In that year, the fifth of Edward the VI, measures were taken by the principal among the clergy to obtain a review and second correction of the Book of Common Prayer. At the deliberations held for this purpose, Knox, the Scottish Reformer, who was then in London, was present. By his influence, many of the principal alterations which then took place in it were effected. In proof of this we quote the following testimony from the celebrated historian of Knox: "Although the persons who had then the chief direction of ecclesiastical affairs, were not disposed to introduce that thorough reform which he judged necessary in order to reduce the worship of the English Church to the Scripture model, his representations were not disregarded. He had influence to procure an important change in the Communion office, completely excluding the notion of the corporeal presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and guarding against the adoration of the elements, *too much countenanced by the practice of kneeling at their reception*, which was still continued. Knox speaks of these amendments with great satisfaction, in his 'Admonition to the Professors of the Truth in England.' 'Also, says he, God gave boldness and knowledge to the Court of Parliament to take away the *round-clipped god*, wherein standeth all the holiness of the Papists, and also take away the most part of superstitions, (*kneeling at the Lord's table excepted*;) which before profaned Christ's true religion."¹ These alterations, it is further stated by this historian,

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. i, p. 69.

gave great offence to the Papists, so much so, that after the Accession of Queen Mary, Dr. Weston, in disputing with Latimer, bitterly complained of Knox's influence in procuring them. "A *runagate Scot*," says he, "did take away the adoration or worshipping of Christ in the Sacrament, *by whose procurement that heresie was put into the last Communion Book.*"¹ Such were the circumstances in which this rubric explanatory of kneeling was first introduced. What was its subsequent history? In the reign of Elizabeth, (whom it is the fashion with modern episcopalian writers to represent as most zealous for the Reformed religion; but of whose popish predilections ecclesiastical history furnishes abundant proof,) the liturgy was again reviewed, and the queen, mainly by her personal influence, and out of an anxiety to please the Papists, *caused to be expunged from it the rubric which declared that by kneeling at the Sacrament no adoration was intended.*² But at a subsequent period we find that it was again inserted. At the restoration of Charles II, "the Church thought fit (says Collier) *to condescend so far as to restore the rubric of king Edward's reign, to please some people either of weak judgments or contentious humours.*" A piece of condescension with which that historian pretty plainly intimates his dissatisfaction.³ Such, brethren, is the history of this famous rubric. It would thus appear that the Church of England can take to herself but little credit for its present appearance in her Service Book.

¹ Fox, p. 1326.

² Neal's Hist. Puritans, vol. i, p. 97—Strype's Annals, p. 83.

³ M'Crie's Life of Knox, note M, p. 427.

It seems to have been introduced into it at first by the advice and influence of the illustrious Scottish Reformer. It was expunged from it afterwards by a semi-Protestant queen, who "feared to carry too far the Reformation from Popery." It was finally reinserted in it, not, it is plainly intimated, from any regard to the interests of truth, but solely from a principle of expediency, and out of condescension to what are termed "scruples and prejudices." With what propriety, then, can the author of "Sermons on the Church" represent the English Establishment as framing this explanatory clause at first, and continuing it afterwards, out of a disinterested anxiety to maintain the purity of God's worship, and to keep from being misinterpreted her administration of his holy ordinance?

While we are willing to admit, however, that in the custom of kneeling as enjoined by the Episcopal Church no adoration of the elements is intended, yet we do not conceive that on that account the custom is exempted from all just censure and objection. It is the duty of every church, as of every individual Christian, to abstain not only from evil, but even "from the appearance of evil." It is her duty to give up every thing in her worship (unless it be expressly enjoined in God's word) which has been perverted to idolatrous uses. The testimony of Jehovah, in Deut. xii, 30, 31, points out, in reference to this subject, the line of duty. He there warns his people that they enquire not after the gods of the heathen, saying, "How did these nations serve their gods, even so will we do likewise." His solemn admonition is, "*Ye shall not do so unto the*

Lord your God." Let the Church of England hear the word of the Lord. Let her in her worship guard "against the appearance of evil"—against every thing that may cause "the truth to be evil spoken of." Let her purge her ritual of that which has given offence to enlightened consciences, and which still continues to do so, which has been perverted to idolatrous purposes, and which is still, in this our day, and in this our land, grievously so perverted. Why will she, by the continued imposition of a needless usage, symbolize with the votaries of the man of sin? There is a letter extant which the learned Beza wrote to Bishop Grindal about the year 1565, which, making use of a quaint illustration, places this subject in a very just light. "If," says he, "ye have rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the practice of worshipping the host, why do you symbolize with Popery, and seem to hold both by kneeling at the Sacrament?" Grindal replied, "that though the Sacrament was to be received kneeling, yet the rubric accompanied the Service Book and informed the people that no adoration was intended." "Oh! I understand you," said Beza, "there was a certain great lord who repaired his house, and having finished it, left before his gate, a great stone for which he had no occasion. This stone caused many people in the dark to stumble and fall. Complaint was made to his lordship, and many an humble petition was presented, praying for the removal of the stone, but he remained long obstinate. At length, he condescended to order a lanthorn to be hung over it. My Lord, said one, if you would be pleased to rid yourself of further solicitation and to quiet all

parties, order the stone and the candle to be both removed.”¹

We shall now proceed to submit to you some remarks *on the office for the dead*, appointed by the Church of England. We cannot but express some surprise that the reverend controversialist who writes on “The Church,” has taken such scanty notice of this important ceremonial. He has devoted a great part of his book to the support of the Church’s ceremonies, he has occupied whole pages with a vindication of forms of prayer, while the burial-service he has never once glanced at in the text, and has condescended only to bestow on it a brief and hurried note in the appendix. Why is this? Is he not aware that this is a great stumblingblock to the Presbyterians? Is he ignorant that they have repeatedly denounced this rite, and that their arguments have never yet been repelled? Is it not well known that there is abroad throughout the land a general and just dislike of this service, not only among Christians of other communions, but even among many in his own church? Why then slip the whole subject into a note at the end of his book, a book professing to vindicate before the world the ritual of the Church of England? We may ask, Is this fair, is it candid? My brethren, if it is neither of these, we will be ready to admit that it is at least—prudent. The reverend gentleman knew that this particular rite of his church is, perhaps, of all others, the most indefensible. Therefore he has very wisely said nothing, or almost next to nothing, in its defence; for the simplest reason in the world—that nothing could be said.

¹ Robinson’s *Claude* II, 77.

But he has said, we admit, something in the note referred to: let us see what it is. Why, in the first place, he has charged the Rev. Mr. James, author of the "Church Member's Guide," a minister, it is well known, of eminent talent and learning and piety, with being *grossly ignorant* or *grossly disingenuous*, because he has taken it upon him to find fault with the burial-service of the Church of England. We have merely to observe, that if he be so, he has erred in good company; for we suppose that no one requires to be told that some of the very best men in the English Church have lamented that it is disfigured with the office for the dead. We believe it is a generally known fact that Thomas Scott, the learned and pious author of the Commentary, declined to remove from a small to a larger parish which was offered him, and that one principal reason which operated with him was, that in the smaller one he was very seldom called upon to perform the burial-service. In "Calamy's Defence of Modern Nonconformity," it is stated that two archbishops of the Episcopal Church, Drs. Sancroft and Tillotson, *strongly disapproved* of some parts of this office; the former of whom declared that he was so little satisfied with it that for that very reason he never took any pastoral charge upon him." Is it not hard then that this Independent minister should be stigmatised as ignorant and disingenuous for doing only what two right reverend fathers in God have done before him? Surely the writer of the "Sermons" will retract this severe imputation when he finds that it rests not alone on the character of Mr. James, but on that of two illustrious dignitaries of the Church of England.

But we shall now show that the charge of disingenuousness applies with tenfold force to the author of "Sermons on the Church." In the Appendix to Sermon III, Note B, he says, "This assertion of Mr. James, (viz., that the English Church represents all as going to heaven when they die, whatever was their previous character) is founded on the expression in the Burial Service, 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.' Surely he must be aware that it is founded on no such thing. Surely he must know that the charge contained in this assertion is founded *on a variety* of expressions in the service, and among others, on the beginning of that very prayer in which occur the words, 'sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.'" That prayer commences thus, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, *of his great mercy to take to himself the soul of our dear brother* here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground in sure and certain hope," &c. Now to these words, the commencing ones of this celebrated prayer, the writer on the "Church" makes not the slightest allusion. He represents his antagonist as grounding his objection solely on one insulated phrase, while he carefully omits the previous context, which gives to that phrase the whole of its significance and the whole of its objectionableness. Is not this disingenuous?

But further, says this defender of the Church, "Mr. James's assertion is contradicted by the very document on which he relies." "One of the prayers," says he, "of our service commences with these words, 'Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those that depart hence in the Lord.

and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity ;” and ends thus, “we beseech thee that we, with all those who are departed this life in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss in thy everlasting glory.” Now would not any one imagine, from this mode of quotation, that this was all that the prayer contained, at least that nothing important intervened? But recur we to the Prayer Book, and we find the following words standing exactly between the two sentences which he has extracted: “We give thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased thee to *deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world*”—of course that assumes that he is gone into a holy and happy world; it then goes on thus: “beseeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect;” implying, it would seem, if there be any meaning in the construction of language, that the person who has died is one of that number. Here, then, are two whole clauses comprising the most objectionable statements in this second prayer, yet to which the writer on the church makes not the most distant reference. He quotes the first and the last of the prayer, which tell nothing, and he adroitly leaves out the middle which tells every thing. Ought he to have charged the Rev. Mr. James with being grossly disingenuous?

But once more, he refers to the third prayer in the burial service as also contradicting the assertion that “the Church of England sends all her members to heaven when they die.” “Another prayer,” says he in the service, “contains this petition, We meekly

beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we shall rest in him," (viz., in Christ). Here our author stops. What! is the sentence done? So would we be led, from his manner of quoting, to conclude. But we shall take the liberty of reading a little farther on and finishing—if not the whole sentence, at least the clause which he has broken off so abruptly in the middle. Here is the whole: "We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in him, (in Christ,) *as our hope is, this our brother doth.*" That is, the minister of the Church of England is bound to express his hope and the Church's hope that the dead profligate, or drunkard, or infidel, as the case may be, *rests in the Lord.* Why did the writer on *the Church* deliberately omit this clause? Did he suppose there were no Common Prayer Books but his own in the city of Derry? Has he not expressed his desire in another part of his work that in every man's house there should be a copy of this book? Can he doubt, then, but that the people, searching it for themselves, will observe the device to which he has had recourse, and marvel at his attempting, by a *suppressio veri*, to evade an argument which he could not meet, and hide an enormity which it was impossible to defend?

Let us, brethren, mark well the nature and tendency of this office of the Church of England. It is one which every minister of that church is bound, by the sixty-eighth canon, on pain of suspension, to celebrate when called upon. There are only three ex-

ceptions: those who are excommunicated; those who commit suicide; and those who die unbaptised. And, with reference to this latter class, let us just pause to remark, that it argues a strange lack of charity in the episcopal church thus to presume that every infant that has been prevented by circumstances from receiving the rite of baptism must therefore perish everlastingly. But, waiving this, we will take a case that comes not within the limits of any of these exceptions. We will take the case of a man who has been throughout his whole life a scandalous and reckless sinner, who has been infidel in his opinions and profligate in his practice, and who, having grown grey at length in age and crime, hath gone to his account without repentance and without hope—"hath died and made no sign." Let us suppose the remains of such an one as this about to be consigned at last to a hopeless and dishonoured grave. What remains but that they should be at once interred, and that standers by should be earnestly warned to "flee from the wrath to come"? But stay—a grave and solemn ceremonial is yet to be gone through, "provided and ordered" by the Church of England. A minister of that church comes forth. He stands beside the new-made grave and opens before the surrounding throng the Book of Common Prayer. A solemn stillness reigns around; the eye of God is bending on the scene; and angels pause to listen to the prayer. What are the words in which it ascends to heaven? "Forasmuch as it hath pleased God *to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother* here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground." What! will the Church of Eng-

land compel her faithful minister to give utterance to this atrocious sentence? Will she compel her priest, the priest of the Lord Jesus, to declare that God hath taken to himself, to the presence of his glory and the fellowship of his ransomed and undefiled church, the soul of this dead profligate, when he must believe in his heart that that soul is even then with the devil and his angels? Will she force the herald of the cross, the follower of the immaculate Lamb, of him who is the "faithful and the true Witness," to express his hope and the Church's hope that the buried infidel, whose corpse is now mingling with the clay, and shall rot there till the pealing trump of God shall wake it up to shame and everlasting contempt, that his doomed spirit now rests in Christ, when he believes and the people believe that that spirit is already "delivered over to the bitter pangs of eternal death"? We ask again, *can* the Church of England do this?

Brethren, we do solemnly protest that we know of few things more disgraceful to the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, than that this most indefensible formula should still blot the records of a professing church of Jesus. Talk of Popery! Why, before this monstrous inconsistency Popery hides its diminished head! Popery will not claim an entrance for her offending sons to Paradise till she has first purified them by subjection to purgatorial fire; but Prelacy, in this instance less scrupulous, transmits them at once to glory, "unhousel'd unanneal'd, with all their imperfections on their head." We cannot but sympathise with the ministers of that church, faithful and conscientious men, required week after

week and year after year to go through this office for the dead. We call upon the Church of England to banish from her Service Book this sore grievance to the consciences of her godliest ministers and people. We implore her to let it no longer insult the understanding and the feeling of the land—to let it no longer afford a handle to the jests of the scoffer or give occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme. And if that church, shackled and powerless, be at present unable from her very polity to rectify this crying abuse, let us hope that the time will soon come when she shall be constrained to take it out of the way; when men, waking out of the sleep of centuries and losing their blind veneration for antiquity in the light of Divine truth, shall bring every atom of religious observance to the measuring-reed of God's word, and when this, and all the other unwarranted usages of her ritual, shall be ejected from the sanctuary as “reprobate silver.”

We have thus, brethren, endeavoured to exhibit and vindicate some of the parts of our Presbyterian worship, and in doing so, have been necessarily obliged to advert to some of the arrangements in that of the Established Church which will not permit us to conform to it. In the limits assigned us, we have been able to glance at only a few of these. Many usages deserving of strong reprobation have not even been alluded to. It is unnecessary to specify these here, as any one who takes up and examines the Book of Common Prayer may easily find them for himself.¹ Nor are these things, as we have seen, objected to now for the first time;

¹ See Note H.

they have been objected to in ages long gone by, and that not merely by those who might be deemed prejudiced opponents of the English Church, but by the wisest and worthiest of her own members. At the period of the Reformation, when the nation had just emerged from the darkness of Popery, some wise and good men might have been willing, for obvious reasons, to bear with them for a time,—but why should they be perpetuated now? There is reason to hope that they will ere long be done away. It cannot be doubted that many of the most devoted of the clergy of the establishment, lament their existence, and long for their removal. We shall quote you the testimony of one of them, a champion of Protestantism, a divine of brilliant talents and unquestioned piety, who is an ornament to the Church of England, whose praise is in all the churches. These are the words of Hugh M'Neill: "I will never, with mine eyes open, palliate, excuse, or daub over *licensed abuses* in our own establishment; that there are such, no honest man who values his bible will dare to deny." What need we any further witness? May this gifted minister of Christ and those other kindred spirits who are now numbered within the pale of the English Church, have their devout aspirations in her behalf speedily realised! May those "irregular movements" which are now beheld on the surface of the establishment serve but to show that there is beneath, the action of an internal fire which will ere long be the mean of bringing out the pure elements of truth from the chaotic mass of carnal ordinances under which they now lie buried. May the period soon arrive when the Church of England

shall arise and shine, "her light being come," when, having shaken off her yoke, and restored her discipline, and simplified her forms, she shall stand erect and majestic as the spouse of Christ, and when, uniting with the other reformed churches of the land, the "sacramental host of God's elect" shall go forth to the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners"!

Meanwhile, my brethren, it is our duty, as the servants of Christ, to protest against every thing in her government and worship that we believe to be dishonouring to Christ. This is the duty of all—this is more especially the duty of ministers of the Gospel. And, in the recognition of this duty, the present lectures have now been delivered in this place. They were not undertaken in an aggressive spirit. Those who are acquainted with the circumstances in which they originated well know that they are mainly defensive. For my brethren who have preceded me, I need not speak; for myself I will say, that I utterly disclaim any thing like a hostile spirit towards the establishment or her clergy. Towards the esteemed minister on whose sermons I have so freely commented, I feel respect for the manliness which induced him to avow and maintain his principles. With other ministers of his communion, faithful and zealous men, I have lived on habits of most friendly intercourse; I expect to continue to do so. I would not so far insult a messenger of the Cross as to suppose for a moment that I could forfeit his good opinion by contending earnestly for what I believe to be the "faith once delivered to the saints."

While then we are careful to put away from us all "bitterness and malice," let us remember that in this controversy *principles* are at stake, and to these we are bound to adhere. These principles, you require not to be told, have been on late occasions publicly and wantonly impugned. We cannot be expected to stand tamely by and see every thing we hold most dear as Presbyterians flouted at and scorned—and that, not by ignorant or infidel declaimers, but by the educated and learned of the land. In such circumstances and at such a juncture, indifference would be treachery and silence would be a crime. When we behold members of the episcopal hierarchy openly assailing our church, when haughty and inconsiderate men choose to occupy themselves in flinging out taunts and sarcasms against their unoffending brethren, when a rector in one part of this province strips our ministers of their commission, and an archdeacon in another declares "prelatic supremacy to be essential to Christian unity,"¹ when, above all, on a recent occasion, a reverend divine scrupled not in the very presence of royalty to represent the Church of England as "the only true church" in these kingdoms, and to sneer at Scotland's Zion as "the community of Presbyterians,"² at such a time as this, brethren, we ask, is it not the duty of Presbyterians to stand forward as did their fathers in days of old, and maintain the principles in defence of which they bled and died? Yes, brethren, the spirit of Presbyterians now is

¹ Archdeacon Mant.

² Sermon by Dr. Hook, preached at St. James's Palace, June, 21, 1838.

what it has ever been in time past—it finds utterance in the poet's words :

“ We own no other head
Than Jesus Christ our Lord,
The King of kings, supreme in power,
By angel hosts adored.

“ The cov'nant of our fathers,
Which life-blood shed has seal'd,
The right to serve our glorious head,
We will not—dare not yield.

“ Their vows upon us lie,
We are a sworn band,
Christ's crown and kingdom to maintain,
And in his freedom stand.

“ O, as in days of old,
Blest Spirit, on us breathe,
And lead us forth triumphantly,
Victors in life and death.’

Let us now, in drawing to a close, address to you two words of exhortation in special reference to our subject. First, we would say to you, *value your forms of worship*. True, they are not essential—they will not alone save you—but they are not therefore to be lightly esteemed. The man who would persuade you that they are of no moment whatever—that it is no matter what forms we adopt or sanction, provided we are sincere Christians—that man is ignorant alike of the word of God, of the claims of truth, and of the nature of the allegiance which he owes to the King of heaven. Let this thought be ever impressed upon your minds, that in nothing

can your devoted loyalty to your Master be more clearly shown than in scrupulous adherence even to the most insignificant of his appointments. It is not in weighty and important matters that the obedient spirit most surely discovers itself. When the affectionate child not merely obeys the principal injunctions of its father, but studiously interprets and anxiously complies with the slightest intimations of his will, it is then that it gives the strongest proof of the filial piety by which it is actuated. And so it is, brethren, when you tenaciously cleave to those forms of worship which your bible has prescribed and are solicitous to maintain them in their integrity, that you give the best evidence of your attachment to the king of Zion, and may hope for that acceptance from him which he has promised to those who "teach and do even his least commandments."

Your forms of worship, we have said, are few and simple—they are not on that account the less impressive. It has been sublimely said by an eloquent writer, "truth is of an awful presence." She requires not the "foreign aid of ornament," she despises the resources of meretricious decoration. Who has not felt when on the "day that the Lord has made" he has joined in the solemn acts of Presbyterian worship—when he has heard the praises of the Eternal sung, not in heartless and measured chaunt, but in earnest strains and with grave sweet melody—when he has seen the man of God ascend the pulpit and heard him preach to the people the words of eternal life—when the prayer of faith has sunk into his soul—when he has listened to the parting benediction pronounced with uplifted hands, and speaking of grace

and mercy and peace to all “ who love the Saviour ;” who that has witnessed all this has not felt that there is an unction, a dignity, and a power therein, which has never been realised in stateliest temples, where art and superstition have alike exhausted their resources, and where,—

“ Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem sounds the note of praise ” ?

Value then, brethren, your form of service, for in it, we believe, you will be best enabled to worship God in “ spirit and in truth.”

Lastly, we would say to you, *depend not on your forms*. The whole constitution of your church is undoubtedly the best. By the discourses which you have now heard from this place, you must, we have no doubt, be fully satisfied of this. The warrant of your church is clear, her ministers are equal, her government is scriptural, her worship is simple. Depend not on all this. The excellence of a church’s external polity is no guarantee against its defection from Christ. Where are now the seven churches of Asia ? Rely not then, brethren, on the outward framework of your Zion ; look to the Lord of the temple, beseech the “ great Inhabitant ” that he would bless and purify and dwell in it for ever. We lament when we see a noble piece of mechanism, a wondrous specimen of human ingenuity and skill and capable of vast achievements in the physical world, lying aside, useless, impotent, and idle ; we grieve to behold so much power wasted—so much latent energy undeveloped and unemployed. Such is the aspect which the Presbyterian Church presents

when lying slumbering and inactive. Let us pray, then, that the influences of the Spirit may descend upon her mightily, that he would use her as a potent lever to elevate our country and propel it onward in the career of spiritual prosperity. Let us as individuals, as families, and as a church cry aloud to that great Being who sways the sceptres of the earth, who clothes his priests with salvation, and who has never yet turned a deaf ear to the petitions of his saints: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old!" "Revive, O Lord, thy work in the midst of the years; wilt thou not revive us again, O Lord, that we may be glad and rejoice in thee?"

END OF DISCOURSE IV.

NOTES TO DISCOURSE IV.

NOTE A, p. 220.

Presbyterians can appeal to high authority to justify them in objecting to the power claimed by the Church of England to decree ceremonies, as a grievance to conscience, and a cause of schism. What a singular testimony is the following from a distinguished prelate of that church, on whose mind, at least, we may presume, prejudice could not have operated! "In all other societies, the express will of the founder, and the terms of fellowship which he has laid down, are accounted sacred. How hard, then, is the fate of those believers in Christ, who desire communion on the terms God has prescribed, to be excluded by the words of men, *by the inventions of men, imposed upon them for His precepts.* And how unhappy is the church to be reduced by any such methods within more narrow bounds than our Lord himself has confined it."—Bishop of Winchester's Postscript to his Answer to Dr. Hare's Sermon, p. 254.

NOTE B, p. 228.

It is worthy of remark, that in "Sermons on the Church," there is not the slightest attempt made to prove that liturgies were used in the primitive church. The utmost that the author ventures on is to show that the Lord's prayer was used in it as a form. This, even if proved, would signify nothing to the argument, but the attempt to prove it is an utter failure. Three quotations are given, which do not by any means establish the point. On the contrary, abundant evidence can be brought from the fathers, that among them, the Lord's prayer was never recognised as a necessary part of the worship. Sir Peter King, in his "Inquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church," has clearly shown that, among others, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Polycarp, and Origen, both use prayers and speak of prayers, in which there is not the slightest mention made of the Lord's prayer.

It may be observed, further, that as those ancient writers did not deem the Lord's Prayer indispensable, neither do they represent any other form as being constantly used in worship. On the contrary, their testimony is wholly against liturgies. Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, all tell us, that in prayer the primitive Christians lifted up their *eyes to Heaven*, meaning, of course, that they were not obliged to fasten them on a book. And Augustine, in commenting on John, xvii, 1, states that Christ lifted up his eyes in prayer, as minding to teach us how we should pray.—See King's Inquiry, Part II, p. 28.—Clarkson on Liturgies.

NOTE C, p. 228.

Of the state of religion, and the ignorance of the great body of the clergy at the time in question, we may form some idea from the following extract of a letter from Paul Fagius to Calvin, written in the year 1550: "Some clergymen hold three, four, or more parishes, without doing ministerial duty, and substitute *such as are unable to read English*, and who at heart are mere Papists. In some parishes, *no sermons have been preached for many years*. The greater part of the fellows of colleges are dissolute epicureans, who try to entice the youth to their own systems. The Government refers the case of the church to the bishops, who declare they can make no alteration unless authorised by the public law of the kingdom."—Calvin's Commentary on Epistle to the Romans, by Sibson, p. 636.

NOTE D, p. 234.

The following somewhat ludicrous instance of the great inconvenience of forms in reference to public emergencies, are given by Anderson, in his Defence of Presbyterian Church Government: "When the prince of Orange landed in England in 1688, it was very well known the body of the English clergy favoured his attempt; yet for several months after, they not only were obliged in law, but actually did pray for king James, begging, in the words of the liturgy, that God would confound the devices of

his enemies. Once more, when prince George of Denmark, her majesty's husband, was dead, the clergy continued as formerly to pray for issue to her majesty, till that clause of the liturgy was discharged by an order of the council."—Defence, p. 306.

NOTE E, p. 238.

These memorable declarations of Dr. Whately respecting unprepared intercession have not only been condemned by Presbyterians, but were the means, it is well known, of drawing forth strong remonstrances even from his own clergy. The following is the language used by a large number of the evangelical party of the Church of England in palliation of those social prayer-meetings which his Grace thought proper to interdict: "We grieve that the line of argument adopted by your Grace is calculated to wound and offend a very large body of sincere Christians, among whom we would name the Established Church of Scotland, as it denies the character of prayer to their worship, because it is presented to God without a precomposed form; and with regard to ourselves, we grieve that an attempt is made to *shackle our consciences* in all common supplication where two or three are met together."—Signed by fifty-seven ministers of the Church of England, December 14th, 1836.

NOTE F, p. 244.

The author here quotes from the Eclectic Review the absurd and hackneyed calumny, "that, out of 258 *Presbyterian* congregations, in England, 235 have become Socinian." We find also that Dr. Boyton, in a sermon preached during the last month in the College Chapel, Dublin, has not scrupled to repeat it. Now we would call upon our author, and Dr. Boyton also, to prove if they can that these 235 congregations who have fallen away so grievously from the faith are *Presbyterian*. It is an indisputable fact that *they are not*. It is well known that they reject almost all the peculiarities of Presbyterianism. Among others the Presbyterian mode of ordination; the government of the church by Synods, Presbyteries, Assemblies, and the office of Elder, as taking an oversight of the flock, are all unknown among them. In no one important point of doctrine or discipline can they be called

Presbyterian. It is true there are at present upwards of sixty congregations in England in communion with the Church of Scotland and holding her standards; but with regard to the 235 whom our author alleges to be Presbyterian and to have renounced their orthodoxy, the statement is utterly unfounded, and consequently the argument built upon it falls to the ground.

NOTE G, p. 251.

Instead of multiplying testimonies from episcopal writers in proof of this, we shall content ourselves with extracting the following passage from "Essays on the Church," a book highly lauded in the Preface to "Sermons on the Church," and therefore, we may presume, a most competent authority: "We have seen a large section of the clergy under the guidance of one of her ablest prelates, insisting that *the church teaches that in all cases, even when the officiating minister is an ungodly man, and the parents and sponsors notorious profligates, the infant over whom the service was read, is still then and thereby actually regenerated.*" —Essays on the Church, page 301.

NOTE H, p. 279.

We would especially refer among others to the confirmation service; the form for the visitation of the sick; the appointment of saints' days and festivals; bowing at the name of Jesus. Without dwelling on these, let us make here two short extracts from the Book of Common Prayer, which may show us that that formulary is by no means so *perfect* in its exhibition of doctrine and its arrangements for worship as the author of "Sermons on the Church" would represent it. With regard to doctrine: In the commencement of the Liturgy we read these words: "from fornication and all other *deadly* sin, good Lord deliver us." What is the meaning of this? Is there any sin that is not *deadly*? Is there no countenance here given by the Church of England to the unscriptural distinction *between mortal and venial sins*?

Again, with reference to *worship*, in the Form of Prayer appointed for the Fast of King Charles the Martyr, occur these

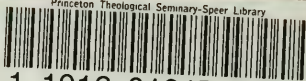
words of Scripture expressly applied to that monarch, "The people stood up and the rulers took counsel against the Lord and against his Anointed." Psalm ii, 2. "Yea his own familiar friends whom he trusted, they that eat his bread laid wait for him." Ps. xli, 9. "The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits." Lam. iv, 20. "In their anger they slew a man," Gen. xlix, 6, "Even the man of thy right hand, the Son of man whom thou hadst made so strong for thyself." Psalm lxxx, 17.

These awful expressions, the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures, applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Anointed of God, the only Saviour of sinners. Yet, in the Book of Common Prayer, these expressions are deliberately wrested from their true meaning and applied to an earthly king whom the Church of England has canonized as a saint and honoured as a martyr, but who, if history speak true, was a compound of selfishness and duplicity, and had as little claim to the one title as he had to the other. Is it not too bad, we ask, that such blasphemies as these should not only be tolerated and perpetuated, but that the book which contains them should be characterised as "*sound and devotional*," as full of "deep experience" and unctious spirit and "*sterling orthodoxy*"? We are ready to say, in the language of a leading religious periodical, "They whose understanding and conscience can stoop to the *fearful and daring impieties* of the Form of Prayer appointed for the Fast of King Charles the Martyr, are beyond the reach of argument."

END OF NOTES TO DISCOURSE IV.



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